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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. XII. No. 24.] LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1807. [PRICE 10D.

"Here is a specimen of the new and pure Aristocracy, created by the Right Honourable Gentleman, as the support of the crown and constitution, against the old, refractory, natural interests of this kingdom. A single Benfield out-weighs them all; a criminal, who, long since, ought to have fattened the region kites with his offal, is, by his Majesty's Ministers, enthroned in the government of a great kingdom; and enfeoffed with an estate, which, in the comparison, effaces the splendour of all the nobility of Europe."

—BURKE; on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, 28th Feb. 1785. See his Works, Vol. IV. p. 308.

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SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

"PERISH COMMERCE" (continued from page 881.)—IX. *Respecting the effects of commerce upon the civil and political liberties of England.*—My correspondent, W. F. S. whose letter will be found in page 854, expresses his fears, that, if commerce were annihilated, we should fall back into that state, when the population of this kingdom consisted of *Lords* and *Vassals*. After having described the rise of civil liberty, he puts his question to me thus: "Do we not, by annihilating commerce, retrace the steps, which brought us from feudal tyranny?" My answer is, that, while, by annihilating commerce, we should not retrace one of those steps, we should cut up by the roots that political corruption, which, in a thousand ways, has operated to our oppression at home, and has been the chief cause of all the dangers, with which we are now menaced from abroad.—This is my opinion. I now proceed to offer the reasons upon which that opinion is founded.—*Liberty*, by which I always mean, *freedom from oppression*, did not arise, in this country, from the operation of *commerce* (that is to say, trade with *foreign nations*), but from the conflicting interests and passions of our ancient kings and their thanes or barons. The church had something to do in the matter; but, it was chiefly the work of the kings, who, in order to free themselves from the tyranny of the barons, called in the people to their aid; and, that this aid might be efficient, they did, by degrees, arm them with political privileges, after having emancipated them and enabled them to possess property. But, this was wholly a work of *internal regulation* and *enterprize*. The people, as fast as they became free, as soon as they could call their *persons* their own, naturally became proprietors; from *free men*, they became *freeholders*; and, with the aid of the numerous measures, adopted from time to time, the land of England, which, at the Norman conquest was in the hands of, perhaps, not more than seven or eight thousand persons,

became divided amongst hundreds of thousands. Power followed property, or, rather, they went hand in hand; the dispersion of the one naturally produced the dispersion of the other; and thus was the partial and capricious sway of the feudal lords made, by degrees, to give way to the operations of general laws and fixed principles of jurisprudence, leaving nothing of the old system behind, except that which was deemed useful, and which really was, and still is, useful, as to the distinction of ranks, the ascertaining of local limits, and the tenure of property.

—What part of this great change was, I would beg to know, the effect of commerce? The effect of trade and connection with *foreign nations*, not one of whom could afford any example whereon to frame that constitution which arose in England, and all of whom have remained, until within these very few years, under the sway of feudal or royal despots?—As fast as the people of England became free, they became possessed of property; they enjoyed not only food sufficient for them, but also a share of the surplus produce of the soil, which would naturally increase from the same cause. Hence, and not from foreign trade, arose arts and manufactures; and, that the persons, thus employed, might have their due share of political power, corporations and boroughs were established. Men in *trade*, that is to say, engaged in *buying and selling*, would naturally arise as arts and manufactures increased. In all these divisions of the population, some would naturally acquire great riches, without any aid at all from *foreign trade*; and, if we have proved, that, upon a general scale, the nation can acquire no wealth from foreign trade; if we have proved, that, if commerce were to cease, all those who are now employed in manufacturing for foreigners, would be employed in contributing to the national wealth at home, what reason is there to fear, that the loss of commerce would throw us back under a feudal tyranny? If commerce were destroyed, the persons now employed in manufac-

turing for foreign nations, would be employed in something else. The *profits*, arising from their labour, would, in that case, indeed, certainly not go to the enriching of *merchants*, but, they would as certainly go to the enriching of some other description of persons engaged in trade; and, therefore, the change could have no tendency whatever towards a restoration of the feudal system. Suppose the silk trade to cease. The landowners, who have heretofore expended a hundred thousand pounds a year in silks for their wives and daughters, would, you will say, apply that sum to the purchasing up of the property of those, who, on account of the cessation of the silk-trade, are obliged to sell; and, thus, branch after branch of trade failing, the property of traders, piece by piece would fall back again into the hands of the landowners, until, at last, we should come back again to the feudal system. But, I have, in my former sheet, page 875 and the two following ones, shown W. F. S. that there are, out of a population of about 11,000,000 no more than 400,000 persons now employed in manufacturing for commerce and in carrying on commerce. Supposing, then, the cessation of the silk and other foreign trades to work in the way above described, we should make but a very trifling retrograde movement towards the feudal system. But, I am sure W. F. S. is too wise to suppose, that the wives and daughters of the landowners would suffer their husbands and fathers to appropriate the silk-savings to the purchase of lands and tenements. In some way or other, they would obtain satisfaction for the loss of their silks. Woollens, for instance, would be made (as, indeed, they now are) to rival silks. Some fineries or other would be made out of our home-produced materials; and, the traders in these fineries (many, and, indeed, most of them, the very same persons that before traded in silks) would possess the profits, and, of course, the riches and the power, before derived from the trade in silks; the balance of property, and of the political power, growing out of property, would continue the same, with this difference, that they would not then, as they now do (as far as commerce is concerned), tend, as I shall now endeavour to show, to oppress and enslave the people, instead of preserving their liberty. — The idea of Goldsmith, as expressed in the verses, taken as a motto to my last sheet, that is to say, *that slaves are purchased at home by the wealth pillaged from savage nations*, is not fully enough explained. To be sure those savage nations are pillaged and most cruelly treated by those, who,

through the means of commerce; purchase slaves at home. But, it is we here in England (I use this word because I hate a long compound name for a nation) who, in fact, pay the amount of the pillage. We pay armies and fleets, and we make direct grants of millions, for the maintenance of colonies. The people there are oppressed and pillaged; but we pay the amount of the pillage. Suppose a parish were wicked or foolish enough to raise within itself a thousand pounds, and give it to an expert and gallant gentleman to go and raise contributions upon the next parish; that the various expences which he should be at for the hiring of subaltern ruffians, for the obtaining of arms, and for food and lodgings, cost him a thousand pounds; and, that, finally, he comes back with a thousand pounds worth of pillage. He has gained a thousand pounds; but the individuals of each of the parishes have lost to that amount; and, the only difference between them, as to the consequences, is, that the parish which has sent him out to plunder, has the satisfaction to see him raised above the heads of his former fellows, and making some of them, in fact, his slaves. Thus, does this sort of commerce, at any rate, deal its curses double-handed. — But, the political effects of commerce are so glaringly injurious, that it is matter of astonishment, that any sensible and honest man should not perceive them and dread their final and inevitable consequences. One would think it impossible for any such man, recollecting the facts detailed in the speech, from which I have taken my motto, not to abhor the very name of commerce. Mr. Burke states, in that speech, that Benfield, *had eight members in the House of Commons*. Now, if the wealth, which, by that corrupt transaction, had been heaped upon him, had been divided amongst a thousand or two of traders at home, is it not evident, that it would have had no such effect as this? If the million of money (I believe it was more) that he received out of the taxes, had not been raised in taxes, it would have been distributed about in supplying the wants and luxuries of those who paid those taxes; but, would nowhere have had, either in the beginning or the end, the corrupting consequence so clearly proved by Mr. Burke. A hundred particular instances might be quoted of this corrupting effect of commerce; but, one has only to reflect a little to be convinced, that commerce *must* have a corrupting tendency. It forms men together in large companies, or bodies. They soon acquire great pecuniary powers; and they as soon perceive, that the minister of the day, be he who or what he

will, has great controul over their interests. Hence they become his own faithful adherents upon all occasions ; and, when the government becomes interwoven with a funding system, the commerce and the minister can, at any time, set the country at defiance. By the debt due from the East India Company to the public, and the demand of payment of which depends solely upon the minister, he holds that body in a string. The merchants and planters of Grenada he holds by a loan made to them out of the taxes, and the re-payment of which loan he can at any time demand. The Sierra Leone Company, finding themselves engaged in a losing concern, wished to throw their debts upon the public. That is, if I recollect rightly, now effected by an act of parliament ; and, before it was effected, the Company received a large annual grant from that parliament of which some of them were members. The Company of merchants at the Bank of England have a law passed to protect them against the demands of the holders of their promissory notes ; and, in short, every thing connected with commerce is *necessarily* on the side of the minister of the day.—The commercial and the funding systems are inseparable. One cannot go to any mischievous length without the other ; and, by the latter, that is to say, by rendering a considerable part of the population mere state annuitants, the nation is made to be even zealous in promoting its own ruin.—It is to be noted, too, that men engaged in commerce, that is to say, in close and interested connections with foreign countries, must have their local affections divided ; and, it would be marvellous indeed, if *some* out of a great number, did not prefer the safety of another country to that of their own, especially when their profession is such as necessarily to have narrowed their minds to questions of individual and immediate profit and loss. These are very fit advisers in matters relating to war, or to treaties ; and yet, it must be pretty evident to every man, of only common observation, that, for many years past, they have been the principal advisers ; and, the result is now, and long has been, before us. Commerce, therefore, so far from operating beneficially, with respect to civil and political liberty, appears to me to have been, in this country, their greatest enemy. Had it not been for commerce, the accursed system of funding never could have existed to any extent. Commerce, by the means of its attendant assemblages and incorporation of rich and active men, has destroyed the natural influence of the proprietors and cultivators of the land, as well as of persons in trade, if unconnected with those

assemblages. Commerce has given rise to, and established, beyond the reach of every thing but national desperation, that system of taxing, which has made a burlesque of the maxim, that “ Englishmen’s houses are their *castles*.” Commerce has erected a sort of under government, to which official reports, not only of important occurrences, in war and in peace, are made, but also of intended measures ; the heads of that affiliation being consulted with as regularly as if they were of the king’s council. Commerce, by the creation of such a power in the state, has caused the national character to be degraded, it being notorious, that, upon almost every occasion, the question has been, not what is just, but what is expedient, the expediency turning solely upon the interests of commerce. Commerce has debased the naval service by giving to the whole of it a trading cast and complexion. Endless is the list of evils which commerce has brought upon England ; but, there needs nothing else than to say, that it has reduced her to *her present situation*, in which the highest hope she entertains is that of being able to prevent herself from being conquered by France.—To those persons (for I am confident there are many), who think with me, upon this subject, how contemptible must appear all those laboured addresses to the public, which have, of late, appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, under the signature of A. B. whose object is to persuade us, that there is scarcely any sacrifice of honour or of permanent safety, which we ought not to make, *rather than risk a war with America*, a war, in which we could not possibly receive any injury from the arms of the enemy. I have thought it my duty, at this time, to read the whole of the letters of this canting, whining, shallow-brained writer ; and, without looking into the book which I see advertised as a compendium of the “*Miseries of Human Life*,” I venture to affirm, that to be compelled to perform this task, is well calculated for the winding up of the melancholy catalogue. There is, however, one passage, which, by way of specimen, and as applicable to the subject of which I have been treating, that I shall here insert, begging the reader to observe, as he proceeds in the perusal of it, how the American foot peeps from beneath the English cloak. I do not take it upon me to assert, that this writer is really of American birth ; but, when we consider, that, in funds, goods, and debts, Englishmen have, probably, two millions worth of property in that country, we may easily suppose the existence of American motives with the honour

of American birth.—This writer, after pretending to wish to see England and America united for the sake of opposing Napoleon, proceeds thus:—“ If he could bring “ America into his vortex, his triumph “ would be complete; without it, in the “ end, he will be nothing. There are, ne- “ vertheless, madmen walking about our “ streets, who have probably broken loose “ when Bedlam was lately repairing, who “ consider a war with America as rather to “ be courted than avoided; we should, ac- “ cording to them, “ blockade all their “ ports, and take all their ships.” It would “ be a notable exploit, to be sure, in the “ greatest WHOLESALE DEALER in “ London, to succeed in nailing up the re- “ tail shops of all his customers in town and “ country, and to procure the seizure of all “ the waggons and lighters, conveying his “ own goods to every corner of the country “ and of the world! To whom, pray, are “ we to sell all these American prizes, and “ our own manufacturers’ produce? And “ from whom, in the event of scarcity, are “ we to import flour, or tar and timber for “ our marine, if we are at war with the “ whole world? But would it be only a “ present loss? Recollect, that the popula- “ tion of America is already eight millions, “ and that the portentous state of Europe is “ a hot bed to her. She doubles her num- “ bers every sixteen years. If peace and “ harmony are preserved, you will soon “ want no other customers. She already “ takes ten millions, annually, of your ex- “ ports. In twenty years, which is but a “ day in the period of a nation, she will “ take twenty millions; and in twenty “ more, which is but as another day, forty “ millions; and in twenty years more, “ which is but as a third day, you cannot “ cloath her, or administer to her wants and “ luxuries. You may blot the Continent “ of Europe out of the map, and yet your “ trade and consequent revenues, would “ overflow. If you continue to cultivate “ peace, she will not manufacture for her- “ self, so as to interfere with you, until her “ boundless deserts are cultivated; a period “ incalculably distant.”—Now, who is the madman? He very coolly calculates upon a sixty years duration of the American Republic; very seriously supposes, that a government like that, of which Mr. Thomas Jefferson is the head, will bear sway over sixty millions of souls! If grasshoppers had souls, it might; but never will it hold together, even nominally, ten millions of human beings; and, if there should be a war between this country and that, well managed

on our part, the far-famed constitution, of which so many well-meaning men have pronounced the eulogium, has not many months to live.—But, let us not pass over the argument that this pleader for America makes use of, in the passage above quoted. It comes upon us in the shape of a comparison, about a great wholesale dealer in London and the shops and waggons of his customers; but, this writer forgot, that, in order to give force to the comparison, he should, first or last, have shown, that there existed a similarity in the circumstances relating to the objects compared; for, it clearly appears to me, that there does exist no such similarity. The wholesale dealer in London must sell his goods, or he must be ruined. He has bought them, and, in order to be able to pay for them, he must sell them again. This is not the case with the nation. It has not bought the goods of any body. It has nobody to pay. It fears neither duns nor bailiffs. It has a hundred bales of cloth; but they are objects of *exchange*; and, if it cannot be indulged in obtaining tobacco for this cloth, the consequence will be, that there will not be so many hands required in the making of cloth, and those hands will (a very few in all) turn to other employments in such a way, that, either directly or indirectly, they will in a short time, produce, from our home produce, something to please idle people full as well as tobacco, without which, I take it, a nation might very well subsist. I love this wholesale dealer too well, however, to quit him yet. Let us suppose a state of barter instead of a state of money, for that will greatly simplify our view of the matter.—The wholesale dealer, who shall have nothing, must exchange his cloth for food, and raiment, or he dies; but, let him have raiment and every thing else but food: he must have that, and he must exchange his cloth to get it. But, the nation has the food that it wants; it has already had a *surplus* quantity of food wherewith to feed the people who were making the cloth, and it was willing to give it, (I might say *throw* it) away for the purpose of obtaining, in exchange, the luxury of tobacco. It has the same surplus now that it had before the cloth was made, and, if it give it away in exchange for superior fineness, or for some ornament, in its cloth, is not that luxury as good to it as the luxury of tobacco?—For the argument of this profound politician, whom the editor of the Morning Chronicle, for the sake, I suppose, of teaching the virtue of patience to his readers, invites to a continuation of his labours; for the argument of this profound gentleman

to have been good for any thing, except that of misleading those who do not reflect, it should, some where or other, have been shown, that we drew the necessities of life from America, as the wholesale dealer must draw them, however circuitously, from his customers. There does, indeed, lower down, drop in, incidentally, a slight attempt towards the establishing of this similarity, in certain cases, which, as always existing, ought to have been the basis of the argument. We are asked, how, in times of scarcity, we are to get *corn*. Now, not to mention, that, from authentic documents, it appears, that during no one year of the late scarcity, the corn imported, from all the foreign nations put together, was more than enough to supply our wants for one week, it happens, unfortunately for the argument of this wholesale politician, that, to whatever amount the imported corn might be, we must have, first or last, produced, on that account too, a *surplus* of corn here, else we could not have fed the people while working upon the manufactures, for which that corn was exchanged; and, whatever effect he may hope to produce upon the minds of unthinking persons, by a display of the horrors of scarcity with closed ports, he may be assured, that, men of common sense and reflection, will never be scared at this idea, knowing, as they do, that less than two millions and a half of us now produce, upon this land of ours, enough food for eleven millions; that part of this food now goes, in the end, to be exchanged for tobacco; and, that, when we want corn, it is because we employ men in manufacturing goods to exchange for tobacco instead of employing them to raise more corn here, for which purpose we have an abundance of land already enclosed, and that waits only for more hands to render it more productive.—

I will pass over the notions, that Napoleon wants only America on his side to complete his triumph; that, without her, he, in the end, will be nothing; that, taking care to secure her continued custom, we may blot the continent of Europe from the map: all this I pass over as the natural offspring of that disgusting vanity, which, next after meanness and fraud, is the prominent feature in the American character, excepting, as, in such cases, I always do, the inhabitants of New England and the Quakers of Pennsylvania.—Having gone so far in the sin of noticing this writer, I am induced, like sinners of another description, to go a little farther, hoping that the reader, when he considers the present state of our connection with America, will not think

his time entirely thrown away in hearing what her adherents have to urge in behalf of further concession to her.—“This view of the subject” [the looked-for sixty millions of customers] “should never be lost sight of for any speculative temporary loss or inconvenience. In all our transactions with America, we should look to the America of fifty years, or a century, to come. The policy of a nation should be prospective, extending to the contemplation of future ages, and not like the prudence of a transaction between man and man, which is properly contracted within the narrow span of individual existence. America also should reason upon the same principle.—She is now in her infancy, and, if not checked in her growth by an unnatural struggle with her parent, will arrive sooner at maturity and greatness, than any nation of antiquity; because she started into life in the meridian of civilization: but if, from her highly Republican Constitution, she acts in her great political character, from the sudden impulses of the multitude, and not from the mature considerations of a regular Government, she may throw away, in a rash moment, all the advantages which her firmness and virtue, in the storm of her revolution, has so eminently entitled her to enjoy.—But to return to the interests of our own country.—It is said, that our losses and privations, which it is admitted must follow from a war, would come back again with fresh advantages with the peace, which our arms would speedily enforce. Nothing can be more fallacious than this expectation. If the present dispute should ferment into national hostility, America will manufacture immediately for herself; and it will be extremely difficult to prevent the emigration of your spinners, whilst the stagnation of your trade continues, even supposing it to be but temporary. The raw material she has already, the rice plantations in Carolina have to a great extent been converted to the growth of cotton, and Louisiana alone would grow enough to manufacture for the whole habitable world. But, supposing her manufactures not to reach at first to supply luxuries (which they certainly would not), she would manufacture cheap goods—would make it a national distinction to wear them, and penal to wear any other. I know that this was contemplated during the American Revolution, if the independence had not taken place; and that it is talked of now from one

“ end of America to another. This is a most serious consideration. The effect of such a spirit of industry, turned suddenly on manufacture, would not cease again upon any peace which the pressure of our arms might produce. When the ordinary course of human luxuries and necessities is stopped up, so as no longer to run habitually upon the fabrics and commodities of particular nations, who have enjoyed a kind of prescriptive monopoly in the commerce of the world, no man living can anticipate its return, or know what course it will take. Like the sea or mighty rivers, which, when forced by floods or tempests out of their accustomed directions, seldom come back again to their ancient beds.—Before I leave this subject let me warn his Majesty's present Ministers to beware how they try any rash experiments upon the trade of this country by an universal blockade, in consequence of the attempts of France to obstruct it. Let them not wean Europe from our manufactures, by attempting to shut them out altogether, lest new habits of luxury and new channels to supply them should start up. Let them take their chance of finding their way till the storm is overblown, and by a manly policy, as it regards America, let us break the French party there, and look to the infinite resources which almost from pole to pole the new Western world presents to us. The late ill-contrived, abrupt, unauthorized landing in La Plata, proves nothing against the probable success which may be expected hereafter from the meditated plans of a vigorous and prudent Government. We should have looked merely to commerce, and not to settlement. We should have held out to the inhabitants the safe pursuit of their own interests, and not have attempted to plant the standard of conquest in such distant regions, which, with our limited population, it was impossible to maintain by force. This mistake may, and I hope will be corrected hereafter. The people of England ought more cheerfully to subscribe to the expenses of such plans, however unsuccessful in the beginning, than to the visionary attempts of weighing the powers of Europe in an imaginary balance, which, after the labour of a century and a half, has ended in our scale being kicked up into the air, with the loss of five hundred millions of our money, whilst all the nations of the earth have descended together in the other. Who knows, but

“ that, by this wiser policy, the Divine Providence may be preparing the light of the Gospel, and all the blessings of civilised life which follow in its train, for nations in the shadow of darkness; and that this favoured nation may still be made the day-star (as she so long has been) of the most extensive human blessings? Who knows, but that thus the emperor of France may live to see, that, instead of obtaining universal empire by ways that are unjust and unwarrantable, his ambition is only raising up more numerous and more virtuous communities to balance his power, and in due time to break it into the atoms which compose it? But the age of miracles is past. It is only by human means that human advantages are to be obtained, and we must do our parts. We stand upon the vantage ground. Nothing conceded by Great Britain can be imputed to fear—she will only rise in dignity by the mildness and moderation of her counsils.”—Here, again, is another of the “Miseries of Human Life.” We are here led, or rather tossed away from America to the continent of Europe, and thence to South America; and, from the propagation of trade we are tossed to the propagation of the Gospel; and, what is worse, we must take notice of every point, or be thought to admit the truth of what is said upon it. As to the propagation of the Gospel, I do not believe, that that BEING, in endeavouring to form an idea of whom, the greatest of minds shrinks back with the perception of nothing but its own littleness, ever made any of his creatures with a view to punish them for not believing in that which they never have heard of, or, hearing of, have not capacities to understand; and, when I consider the abominations, which, under pretext of carrying the light of the Gospel, have been committed by Spaniards in South America and Englishmen in Hindostan, I am rather disposed to invoke Divine Providence to prevent any farther progress in that way. I am for “raising up no more *new communities*,” guided, as I am, in my wishes by experience of the past; and, I cannot help suspecting, that the world has not been much improved by the exchange of inhabitants, which has taken place in the United States of America. But, to finish this peroration since we have begun upon it, is it not kind in this ill-disguised American to send us to find new markets in South America, and to carry on the work of religion there, while his country is to be left to carry on a free trade with our enemies in Europe? “Let us,” says he, “by a

“ *manly* policy towards America, break the “ French party there, and look at the infinite resources, which, almost from pole to pole, the Western world presents to us.” And what is this “ *manly*” policy? Why, *concessions*, to be sure. “ We stand,” says he, “ upon the vantage ground. No “ thing conceded by Great Britain can be “ imputed to *fear*. She will only rise in “ *dignity* by the mildness and moderation of “ her councils.” If this writer had not in his memory the dialogue between JOHN BULL and NIC FROG, wherein the latter wheedles the former to ruin himself that Nic may be the gainer, this passage is only another proof, added to the many already existing, that great wits often fall upon the same idea. Of one thing I am pretty certain, that the late ministers, were they in power, would follow the advice of this writer; for, the person who has the controul over the pages of the Morning Chronicle, would not, otherwise, have given such unqualified praise to these letters, which have evidently been published with a view to the producing, in the public mind, an effect in favour of concessions to America. But, how impudently false is the assertion, that, concession to America, at this time, would not only be imputed to *fear*, but would raise Great Britain in *dignity*! Was there ever any thing so impudent as this! It *must* be imputed to *fear*, because it could be imputed to nothing else; and what but an enemy, an enemy base and hypocritical, could give such advice? If these concessions are made, there is, at once, an end of the struggle. We give up. We acknowledge ourselves beaten. We declare ourselves a set of traders, who must starve if their trade be considerably diminished; and, our enemy, who waits for the confession, will give us back our beloved trade, upon the sole condition, that we give him up the country. The treaty will be short and pithy, and, from the bottom of my heart, I believe, that there are many persons in the country who would hail it with joy, if they could obtain security for the peaceful continuation of commerce.—But, let us, since we are so far in, examine a little into the farther consequences, which this writer apprehends from a rupture with America. She will (dreadful thought!) *manufacture for herself*. We have proved, that it would be a change *advantageous to us* to cease to supply her with manufactures, but, at this time, it is worth while to see what her advocates say, as to the effect of that change upon her. We are told by this writer, that she would make it a national distinction to

wear goods of her own manufacture, and would make it penal to wear any other, such regulations, to his own knowledge, having been in contemplation during the rebellion, and, as he also knows, are now again talked of from one end of the States to the other; that this is a matter for most serious consideration with us, because the effect of such a spirit of industry, turned suddenly on manufacture, would not cease again upon any peace, which the pressure of our arms might produce; that she has the raw material in abundance, being capable of growing *cotton* enough to supply the whole civilized world.—What, then, is cotton all that we supply her with? It does not make a *tenth* part of her imports from England. By descending to almost a savage state, she might do without our hardware and some other branches of manufacture; but, without our wool, she could not exist even in that state. It is as necessary to her as food. Without it life cannot be preserved; and, were I minister of England, I would soon convince her, since she has begun to be so insolent, and to treat us as shop-keepers, that she held her life at my mercy. America is a country which has an average *hard* winter of *seven months*. There needs no authority to convince us, that she *must* want a great quantity of woollens of every description, and that she *cannot* produce, proportionately, much wool; because, as to the first, the bodily sensations of every man will lead him to a right conclusion, and, as to the second, it requires but a very slight degree of observation to convince one, that, in a country which has such winters, sheep cannot be raised to any extent. Add to this the three circumstances, that the winters are always accompanied with deep snow; that the summers are as much hotter than ours as the winters are colder; and that the un-tilled land is covered with impenetrable woods, instead, as here, with grass or heath. There needs nothing more to convince the reader, that America not only cannot produce woollens enough for her now, but that it is absolutely impossible that she ever should.—Mr. Spence has, I perceive, been deceived by one of those deceivers, the American land-jobbers, upon whose authority he states, that the Kentucky farmer “ makes even his own “ clothing at home, and sells no more of “ the produce of his land, than will serve “ to buy him salt and a few other articles,” amongst which few articles he includes, of course, his coat, waistcoat, flannel shirt, stockings, overalls, and blankets; for these he *must* have, and he *must* have them from

England. And where does this Kentucky farmer get his *hardware*? Good God! what silly lies do these fellows put into print! And yet they find even sensible men ready to believe them. Mr. Spence has, I should think, in his single head, more real wisdom than all the “New Amphycionic Council,” (as poor Mably called the Congress) put together. But what the Americans want in wisdom and in wit, they amply make up for in impudence; and experience teaches us the great utility of that endowment in obtaining belief to falsehood. What always surprised me most, was, how they could look *one another* in the face after having published their lies. But, it seemed to be a thing understood amongst them. As if they had entered into a compact, as if they had promised and vowed at their baptism, to humbug the whole world and especially England. I really am not quite in charity with Mr. Spence for having given currency to this representation; for, what sort of pots and kettles and candlesticks and locks and keys and plates and dishes did he believe it *possible* for a Kentucky farmer to *make at home*? What sort of shoes? Nay, though he may grow the *flax*, what sort of *shirts* and *handkerchiefs*? What sort of *caps* and other things for women and for young children? I'll tell Mr. Spence what an American farmer makes at home. Most things in wood, except what is called furniture, and that he buys. Coarse aprons; coarse linen for summer trowsers; bed-ticking of a coarse kind; and in families abounding in females, some coarse shirts to work in; as also a little of a sort of stuff called linsey woolsey. But, even this practice is far from being general, there not being, perhaps, one farmer in ten who is able to adopt it to any extent worth mentioning. This is the real state of the case. I know it to be so from having not only lived many years in America, but from having passed a considerable part of my time in the houses of farmers. From this statement is it not clear, that the people cannot exist without imported woollens, and that, too, in great quantities? The country never could have been settled without the aid of the wool of Europe; and, for the reasons which I have given, it cannot now exist without it.— But, this writer, of whose lucubrations the Morning Chronicle is so anxious to obtain a continuation, tells us, that, by making it a *national distinction* to wear home manufactures, and *penal* to wear any other, the thing would be *easily* accomplished. Very easy indeed, to hang a man or woman, or, according to the *old practice*, to ride them

naked upon a three sided rail having first dressed them in a garment of tar and feathers; or, not having a jail at hand, to shut them up in their own houses, or townships, denying them all communication with friends or relations, and denying them, at the same time, *all medical assistance*: by hellish means like these, which none but Americans ever practised, they might prevent people from wearing many articles that they now wear; but, not English woollens; for them even the tormentors themselves must wear, or they would be frozen too stiff to be able to inflict their torments. However, supposing the Devil to come to the aid of the fraudulent debtors to English merchants (for those are the great enemies to England), and to furnish each of them with a garment from his own manufactory, frost and snow proof; and supposing, that, by one means or another, a state of things is brought about, in which even English woollens can be dispensed with. The consequence *to us*, we have shown, would be beneficial; but, in order to shew that this profound gentleman has, if he be sincere, taken a false alarm, let us apply what he says of America to ourselves. He tells us, that the agricultural industry of America would *suddenly be turned on manufacture*. Well, then, I think our manufacturing industry might, without any riding upon three edged rails, be as suddenly turned upon agriculture; for, it is pretty evident, that a man weaver will learn to thresh quite as soon as a thresher will learn to weave; and that a boy or girl spinner will learn to weed or to tend sheep quite as soon as a boy or girl shepherd or weaver will learn to spin. They will require the same quantity of food in one situation as in the other; and, if the loss of American commerce had this effect, the change would produce no other consequence, than that of an addition to the good morals, the health and bodily strength of the people here, while the change in America would produce a contrary effect, except as to *morals*, for, in that respect, with the exceptions before made, it may safely set all change at defiance. But, the truth is, as has been before amply proved, that the cessation of commerce altogether, and, of course, with America, would produce in England, the effect here contemplated only in part, and that, perhaps, a very small part. We now raise, upon our own lands, food to keep, say a thousand, manufacturers to make goods to be sent to America, there to be exchanged for tobacco, for instance; if we did not give them the food for this purpose, we should give it them for some other purpose, and, as to-

bacco is confessed if we could thousand luxury, contrib called we send something holder this gen from c to the putting in this and that resource this ins revenue the Pa produc from t imitati the ope if we publish pocket shall fi tives o duced. we vie sation on the accom fit. V but wh ception of whi rally g own m insure world tinctio own n do we rails, invent with need natural soil w feeds time, nience of the that p makin have regula have for w from

bacco is a pure luxury, though, it must be confessed, a very strange one, we should, if we could no longer get tobacco, give these thousand persons food to make us some other luxury, and, perhaps, it might be a luxury contributing more towards what may be called national wealth than a thing which we send upwards in smoke or downwards in something still more offensive to the beholder; and, as to *revenue*, of which also this gentleman is pleased to speak, as arising from *commerce*, we have proved, I trust, to the satisfaction of every man capable of putting two ideas together, that *all* revenue, in this country, is paid by the *people here*, and that the ability to pay it comes from resources inseparable from the land. In this instance of the tobacco, who pays the revenue? The Parson, who smokes it; and the Parson is enabled to pay for it by the produce of his living, and that produce comes from the land. A newspaper publisher, in imitation of his betters, smokes it too. Here the operation is a little more intricate; but, if we trace back the money, which the publisher gets by his newspapers, to the pockets of those who read them, we shall find that they, too, are the representatives of something which the land has produced.—Thus, then, in whatever light we view the commerce of America, its cessation can be no injury to us as a nation; but, on the contrary, must, if the thing can be accomplished, be finally a permanent benefit. We are so situated as to want nothing but what our land produces, with the exception of the few articles of naval stores, of which, too, our marine, a marine naturally growing out of and supported by our own mines and domestic trade, will always insure us an abundance, in spite of the world combined. We want no “*national distinctions*” to induce us to wear cloths of our own manufacturing and produce; much less do we want, for that purpose, the three edged rails, or any of those infernal transatlantic inventions, by which murder is committed with the levity of a wake. We have no need to have recourse to any violent or unnatural means. The surplus produce of our soil will still feed all those whom it now feeds; and, though, doubtless, for a short time, there will be some individual inconvenience and distress arise from the changing of the channel through which it now reaches that part of the people who are employed in making manufactures for exportation, we have only to let the thing alone, new and regular channels will open, and we shall have the experimental proof of the truths, for which I have been contending, and from my anxiety to establish, which I have,

I am afraid, put to too severe a trial the patience of the reader.—In taking leave of this subject, for the present, I must point out to the reader a letter from MR. SPENCE (which will be found below), complaining of my insinuations against him, in the making of which he has convinced me that I was wrong, and I, therefore beg his pardon. I do not, however, allow, that I was a plagiarist either from Aristotle or Bishop Berkeley; for, though it now appears (what I did not know before) that they inculcated the same principles, which I have been endeavouring to inculcate, the application of them to a state of things like the present is new. I felt, before receiving his letter, great admiration of the talents of Mr. Spence, entirely unmixed with any thing like literary envy; but, I must confess, that there is one honour, which, as I have hitherto enjoyed, so I wish always to enjoy, undivided with any mortal breathing, and that is the honour of being abused by the hirelings of the press, those enemies of truth, those darkness and pestilence shedding stars, those curses and scourges of the community. This wish is, perhaps, a weakness; but, who has not his weakness? Mr. Spence makes but a poor apology, or rather none at all, for putting F. L. S. to the end of his name. Plain WILLIAM SPENCE would have answered every useful purpose; and, I venture to say, that he is, in his own mind, convinced, that the society, to which he belongs, wherever and whatever it may be, is unworthy the honour he has done it. Men who are nothing of themselves naturally wish to crowd into a society or party. “What are you?” said a friend of mine, one day, to another person. “A staunch Pittite,” answered he. “That’s well for you,” replied my friend, “for now you are *something*.” But, Mr. Spence is not one of those nothing-men. He had no rational temptation to add any initials to his name; and, besides, it was imitating those impostors, who cheat the unwary by practising the trade emphatically called *book-making*, which is entirely an operation of the hand and scissars. I declare with perfect seriousness, that my insinuations, of which Mr. Spence so justly complains, arose, in great part, from the prejudice excited by those unfortunate initials; and, when one starts with a prejudice, it generally sticks by one to the end of the journey. When I see L. L. D. in a title page, if I am not well acquainted with the name that precedes it, I instantly throw down the book, as the work of one who has obtained his certificate of learning from our “*well educated*”

neighbours to the North, at the price of a second-hand wig.

AMERICAN STATES.—Since the greater part of the foregoing article was written, I have, through the news-papers (who said they were good for *nothing*?), received a speech, or address of President Jefferson, at the opening, on the 27th of October last, of the "New Amphycionic Council," commonly called the Congress of the United States of America.—Upon the want of candour, the partiality, the falsehood, both expressed and by omission, of this Amphycionic address, it is quite unnecessary to comment; they being too glaring to escape the attention of the most superficial reader. The sum and substance of the address is this: "We will frighten the mercantile government of England into such further concessions as shall serve her enemies in Europe for an example at the next peace, and thereby we will undermine her maritime power, and glut, in her fall, that vengeance, which her having continued great in spite of her loss of us, has excited in our breasts, as being a sore rebuff to our vanity." This is the language of their hearts; this is the design which they harbour; and, looking at the ministers, looking back at the school in which they were bred, looking at their recent proclamation with regard to America, looking at the number, the connections, and the influence of those concerned in American trade, American lands, and American funds, I am far from being confident, that the design will not succeed.—The temper of the ministers may, in some degree, though, I should hope not wholly, be judged of from the following article, taken from the Courier of the 8th instant, that paper being, at present, engaged in serving them in the double capacity of injector and pulse-feeler with the public. "The partizans of America assert that it is the interest of this country to remain at peace with America. It is so—but it is equally the interest of America to remain at peace with us—the interest is mutual, or rather we should be justified in maintaining that it was more the interest of America than of Great Britain. But America acts and has long acted towards us as if she thought the behaved with great condescension and favour to us in not taking part against us, as if she thought the advantages of peace were all on our side, and as if in not going to war she consulted a principle of generosity towards us rather than a principle of inclination. Hence she has never failed to manifest discontent, to make complaints,

" to urge demands which she has conceived " we would not refuse, because we would " not relinquish the benefits we derived, " from being at peace with her—hence her " continual encroachment and attempts to " get concessions from us. It is remarkable " that the cry against all the late Administrations has been, that they manifested " too great a disposition to make Concessions to America—it was a charge brought " against the Administration of Mr. PITT " —it was a charge which was very generally brought against the late Administration—It was a charge which, in the affair " of Admiral BERKLEY and in the proclamation against searching neutral ships of " war, has even been brought against the " present Ministers. Whether these charges were past to the extent to which they are urged, we shall not now enquire; but they proved, at least, that there was no disposition on the part of any Administration to behave with harshness or injustice towards America. In proportion, however, as she discovered a yielding and conciliating disposition on our part. Did her avarice and desires increase—acquiescence in one demand created only fresh demands, and the more moderation we evinced, the more did it fail to produce a corresponding disposition on her part.— We have now the proof and demonstration before us, that *America is not to be conciliated by concession*—The period of concession is past—she has mistaken our moderation for meanness—she has impeded our forbearance to fear—it is high time we should convince her of her error.— A more disingenuous speech than that of Mr. JEFFERSON's—a speech more unworthy of a statesman—more resembling that of the leader of a party than of the head of a government—more liable to the charge of partiality, of wilful concealment of facts, it were difficult to conceive.—We know well enough that Mr. JEFFERSON has always had a strong attachment to the French, an attachment which all the horrors of the Revolution have not impaired; but we never could have supposed that in a grave and solemn exposition of the situation of his country to his own legislature, he would have presumed to have characterised the conduct of France, which has been in the highest degree hostile and haughty to America, as perfectly amicable and friendly, while he presented our conduct and our Orders in Council, which France has obliged us to adopt, in the most black and warlike point of view.—The period

“ for electing a President of the United States approaches.—He may wish to propitiate the democratic party in America, and to prevail upon them to re-elect him to the President’s chair. He may also have directed all his indignation against this country, and kept entirely out of view the conduct of France, from a belief that France may at last oblige us to surrender part of our maritime rights. But has this sapient President no appreciations that the experiment might be fatal to the interests and independence of his own country, *and that should France finally prevail over England, the liberty of America would not long survive?* There is another circumstance of which we should suppose Mr. JEFFERSON cannot be ignorant; that war with this country must be a war without hope; not only without hope, but with certain destruction to the American commerce? *But perish commerce! is perhaps the motto of the American President, as well as of certain wiseacres on this side the water.*—During his residence in France, he became enamoured of the doctrines of the *OEconomists* and *Turgotists*, and he wishes, pitifully, to try the experiment of a nation relinquishing foreign commerce, living upon the produce of its own territories, and confining itself to the pursuits of agriculture. If such be his wishes, we know not that he could have found out a more likely means of realizing them than by going to war with this country.—War with this country, it is scarcely possible to conceive he is not desirous of provoking, by the concealment of every fact which might dispose Congress or the people of America to adopt amicable or pacific measures.—It is utterly improbable that he could have been ignorant, when Congress met, of the *disposition and feelings of his Majesty’s Ministers, with respect to the affair of the Chesapeake.*—It was known in this country about the 26th of July, on the 27th July the subject was alluded to in both Houses of Parliament. To a question from Mr. WHITBREAD in the House of Commons, Mr. PERCEVAL, the chancellor of the exchequer, replied, that “ All he could say was, that if, upon receiving the necessary information, it should appear that there was any thing improper or unjustifiable in the conduct of the officers concerned, there certainly would be every wish, on the part of his Majesty’s Ministers, to make the fullest reparation the nature of the case would admit of.”

Mr. Whitbread immediately said, “ that he was glad he had asked the information; because the answer he had received from the right hon. gent. afforded him the greatest consolation.*—This declaration of his Majesty’s ministers must have reached America long before October; indeed we have seen it ourselves in the American papers. We have every reason to believe also that government did transmit a distinct disavowal of the affair; and we are confident too that Mr. Jefferson was informed of the fact that our government did not claim the right of searching neutral ships of war.”—Don’t cry! I thought that “ NO-POPEY” had more vigour. What, can you show vigour towards nobody but the Irish?—Come, wipe your gentle, sweet, no-popery eyes, and tell us all about your wrongs. And so, you sent this unreasonable man word, did you, as soon as possible, that you “ did not claim the right of searching ships of war,” and, of course, that you gave up Admiral Berkeley, and were ready “ to make the fullest satisfaction the nature of the case would admit of?” You hastened to tell him this, did you? Well, and what then? He turned his back upon you, did he, in expression of his contempt, and represented the affair to the Amphycionic Council, just the same as if he had not received your private apology. Really, that was pretty well, I think; for, if he had spoken to the Council about your apology, it is probable they would have spitten in your face, for they did actually spit at one another when I was in America. But, my dear gentle no popey, are you surprised to find, that “ America is not to be conciliated by concession; that she has mistaken your moderation for meanness; that she has imputed your forbearance to fear?” Why, evangelical no-popey, why should you be surprised at this, when, upon the first appearance of your proclamation, I told you it would be so, and that, too, almost in the very words, wherein you now state your conviction. Nay, I warned you of it at the time when Mr. PERCEVAL gave the above quoted answer to Mr. Whitbread. I expressed my regret, that that answer foreboded yielding; and, I explicitly told you, that to give signs of a readiness to yield was the only possible way to produce a rupture with America; but, either from the natural softness of your disposition, or from having all your vigour engaged in Ireland, you went on

* See Cobbett’s Parliamentary Debates, vol. ix, p. 930.

relenting, and you have now the consequence before you. Perhaps you will say, as Mr. Perceval did, in the court of King's Bench, "what are you, that we should have believed your predictions?" Soften that killing frown, my angelic no-popery, and I will tell you what I am. I am a person, rendered by experience (which makes fools wise, you will observe), thoroughly skilled in the American character, manners, interests, and motives of political conduct. I understand well the nature of their government, the resources of their country, the means and the wants of the people; and I understand, too, the nature and extent of their connections with this and with other countries. Farmer (to construct a sentence after the manner of the learned George Chalmers), Farmer there is not, who knows his cattle better than I my Americans. I have summered them and wintered them for eight long years; I have tried them upon all sorts of grounds and in all their paces; I know all their tricks (and they have not a few), all their ailings and failings; all their bad qualities and all their good ones. And this, no-popery, is what I am, a person, I presume, better calculated to give you advice than Mr. Whitbread, or Mr. A. B. of the Morning Chronicle, who calls upon you to make *further concessions*, in order to "break the French faction in America;" but, be assured, sweet saint, that you may break your heart and neck, and give your body to be burned in the attempt, and that you will fail at last; of the truth of which you must, one would think, be now pretty well convinced. The ruling party in America like you just as well as your political opponents; they laugh at your cries of no-popery and of danger to the church. These, your wars, are matter of diversion for them. They hate us all together, and would annihilate us, if they could, without any of those considerations, which you seem to suppose they ought to have, about not favouring Napoleon in his views upon us, lest he should finally fall upon them, and take their "liberty" from them, no such idea having ever come athwart their minds. As to *real liberty*, they have not much to lose, any more than certain other nations that I could name; and, they could *talk* about it, under a Buonaparté as well as under a Thomas Jefferson.—You have nothing left, therefore, but to bow down your neck at once, or to gird on your sword. Nay, draw it out, lay aside your sweet consenting conceding disposition, screw up your mouth and knit your brows, as Pitt used to do, when a hard gravelly truth fell upon his ear, and

let your eyes flash religious fire upon these refractory Americans. But, if you do yield, as, from the known mildness of your nature, I suppose you will, let me beseech you to do it openly and without reservation. Down upon your saint-like marrow-bones, nay prostrate yourself at full length. Let us have no more *private* apologies; none of your penance performed in a corner; come forth in the white sheet at once.—You are in a sadly "unsatisfactory state," I must confess.—Speaking now to my readers, I would ask them, what, if our doctrines respecting commerce be sound, we have to fear from a war with America, who, it is allowed, on all hands, cannot touch us with her *arms*? The truth is, that it is only cowardice in our councils that can, even now, produce a war. The wise man of the Morning Chronicle thinks the President has called the Congress together to *consult* with them. Not at all. They have been called, at an earlier period than usual, merely for the purpose of intimidating us by the President's address, which was written for *our* use and not for that of the "Amphyctionic Council." If we remain firm, they will give way; if we recoil, they will tread upon us, step after step, till we are down and trampled under their feet.—They cannot maintain war against us for a year. The thing is impossible; and, even during that year, they must and will have our goods. We have nothing to do but to send out from ten to fifteen frigates; their trade is at an end in a month, and their people soon afterwards in mutiny. Mr. Jefferson's hatred may be great, and his party may be strong; but, he will have two most formidable enemies to cope with at home; namely, the *back* and the *belly*. Coffee, molasses, and rum, are, in that country, nearly necessities of life; and, these come only in ships. Of the absolute necessity of woollens I spoke before. In short, it is downright madness to talk of their carrying on a war for the purpose of obtaining concessions of speculative good from us. A war, upon such grounds, would not only overset Mr. Jefferson's party, but his government. Does any one imagine that the people of New England, who have long wished, and expressed their wishes, for a separation from the Southern States, will forego that commerce, which is necessary, not to their comfort, but to their existence, to humour the partialities of those whom they hate? The people of New England are wise, brave, and virtuous; they are the soul of the country; and, we may be assured, that they will not tamely submit to be made the instruments of their own misery. A

war it is that would, therefore, "break the French faction in America;" but, no concessions would have such a tendency; while they must, in the end, work our ruin, because they would destroy our power upon the sea.—*Botley, Dec. 10, 1807.*

LETTER FROM MR. SPENCE.

SIR,—As the dissemination of opinions, which at this juncture I deem particularly important, was the object I had in view in publishing the pamphlet on Commerce, from which you have of late made such large extracts, I cannot but feel highly obliged to you for so effectually promoting my purpose. I have to thank you also for the compliments which you pay me. But, along with these you couple a charge of plagiarism. You broadly insinuate, that however excellent my ideas may be, they are wholly stolen from your Political Register. Such a charge requires some notice, and I intend this letter as a refutation of it; for, of all stealing, literary stealing is the most indefensible; and I should have little hope that my opinions would have any weight with your readers, if, influenced by your insinuations, they believed them to be advanced by a plagiarist. I should have written what I now send you, immediately after seeing your No. of the 21st of Nov., but your charges seemed to thicken so marvellously, that I was induced to wait a week longer for their probable accumulation. In your last No. I perceive you appear to have exhausted your accusations; and, I therefore, lose no time in transmitting my defence. Before, however, I enter upon it, you must suffer me to premise, that I feel no ill humour towards you on account of your insinuations. On the contrary, conscious how groundless they are, I have been highly gratified by your critique. Your sneer at "my weakness in putting F. L. S. after my name," and your sage conjecture that I (who was never out of England in my life, nor my forefathers either, as far as I know), *must* "be a Scotchman," have amused me much more, I dare say, than any of your readers. And the gratification I have derived from seeing the opinions which we hold in common, so ably and staunchly supported in a work which has such extended circulation, has far outweighed any sensations of anger, on account of the injustice you have done me.—To proceed with my reply to your accusation of plagiarism. In the first place, I might state, and bring forward the evidence of at least a dozen literary friends in support of my assertion, that all the main positions of my pamphlet were maintained by me at least

six years ago: and, indeed, I have now by me a paper which was read to a literary society in 1801, expressly in support of these doctrines. But there is no necessity for proofs of this kind. Such proofs would be necessary only, if I had claimed any *originality* in the positions which I maintain; but you, Mr. Cobbett, well know, that I make no such claim. You know, that I explicitly adduce the arguments which I employ, in support of doctrines which I state to have been maintained long ago, by philosophers known by the title of the French Economists. I ask you, therefore, in the second place, whether there was ever since the creation of the world, such a charge of plagiarism brought forward as yours? Is there an instance on record, of one author charging another with stealing his ideas, when that other expressly declares, that he is maintaining opinions supported by writers who flourished before either of them were born? Yet precisely such a charge is yours. The doctrines that agriculture is the sole source of wealth, and that commerce cannot enrich a nation, were insisted upon 50 years ago, by certain philosophers in France. In my pamphlet, avowing the source whence I derived them, I profess merely to place these doctrines in a new point of view, to restrict them in some respects, to elucidate them more fully in others, and to deduce some conclusions from them, which, as far as I knew, were novel. How preposterous, then, to charge me with stealing these ideas from you! You talk of my "taking pains to premise that I was the first to promulgate such sentiments." But, where do I take any such pains? I say, indeed, that the motive which induced me to publish on the subject, was the wish to lead the 99 out of 100 of those of my acquaintance, (yours, it appears, are a more enlightened tribe) who believed commerce to be essential to our existence, to entertain more manly and just ideas of our independence. But surely, Mr. Cobbett, your experience must have taught you, that opinions may be promulgated over and over again without working conviction: and though I knew, therefore, that similar opinions with mine had frequently been before the public, I did not, on that account, think it unnecessary once more to give them in a new form; especially since, if digestion be allowed to assimilate our mental food to our own substance, I might fairly consider these ideas my own, for I had not read one of the works from which they were originally drawn, for at least 6 or 7 years previous to the writing my pamphlet; and since, be-

sides, as a combined whole, my system differs essentially from that of any political economist. Your opinions on these topics, seem to have been drawn from the stores of your own mind. You have much greater merit, therefore, than I can lay claim to. But be contented with this praise. Usurp not a title to originality, which cannot be conceded to you. You please yourself with the idea of being the *creator* of these doctrines, and you amuse yourself with playing on my language, and calling me the transmuter or manufacturer of them. I am content with the latter designation, but, alas! I must deprive you of the glory of the former. You the creator of the opinions, that agriculture is the great source of wealth, and commerce, merely a transfer of it! Why, my good Sir, these opinions were maintained 2200 years ago by an old Grecian named Aristotle. Your antipathy to the learned languages prevents my referring you to this philosopher in his own tongue, but take the trouble to look over Dr. Gillies's translation of his ethics and politics, and you will see that the vile plagiarist (pardon the anachronism; you will shortly find that you have set me the example) has run away with all your discoveries. If this research be too fatiguing for you, I have another of these fore-stalling rogues of antiquity to bring to your notice. Turn to the 1st vol. 8vo. edition of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," p. 341, and you will find that a certain monarch, named Artaxerxes, gave it as his opinion 2000 years ago, "that agriculture is the sole source of wealth, and that all taxes, must in the end, fall upon the produce of the soil." But, I foresee that you have still a hole to creep out at. A saving clause in one part of your remarks teaches me, that you will say, "that, at least, you are the first promulgator of these opinions in Britain." But if you solace yourself with such a hope, I am once more obliged to demolish your air-built castles. Look over the *Querist* of good Bishop Berkeley, and you will be convinced that all these discoveries which you claim, were perfectly familiar to him. Adam Smith, too, however opposed to our tenets he may appear at the first glance, if sifted to the bottom, will be found, not widely to differ from us. The very object of Lord Lauderdale's "inquiry" is to prove that "land and labour are the *sole* sources of wealth;" and to omit other instances, a pamphlet was published a few years ago by Dr. Gray, which carries these doctrines to a greater length than any of us. Even your old friends the Edinburgh Reviewers (would you have thought it Mr. Cobbett?) have once at least,

whatever they may be now, been of our opinion on these points. Refer to Vol. I. p. 445 of their Review, and you will find them arguing that all taxes fall eventually upon the land proprietors; and that, consequently, agriculture must be the grand source of wealth. Thus, you see, even if you had maintained these important positions, more strenuously than you have done, I could with no propriety have given you the credit of being their first discoverer. Such an unjust distribution of literary merit, if it had not raised the ghost of Bishop Berkeley from his grave, would certainly have brought Lord Lauderdale, Dr. Gray, and a whole tribe of enraged authors about our ears; and I even tremble, when I think of the vengeance which those terrific Scotch disectors, the Edinburgh Reviewers would have taken on us. As it is, I should not wonder, if, losing sight of their identity, they were to fall foul of us; but with what whetted beaks, and sharpened talons, would they not have pounced upon us, had they caught us monopolizing the credit of discoveries which were made ages since!—As you may not have Bishop Berkeley's works at hand, to prove to your readers, that we have great authority on our side, suffer me to quote one of his queries. Q. 123 "Whether one may not be allowed to conceive and suppose a society or nation of human creatures, clad in woollen cloths and stuffs, eating good bread, beef, and mutton, poultry, and fish in great plenty; drinking ale, mead, and cyder; inhabiting decent houses built of brick and marble; taking their pleasure in fair parks and gardens; depending on no foreign imports whether for food or raiment: and whether such a people ought much to be pitied?" Two more queries may serve to dissipate the fears of those good souls who think we shall be ruined, if we cannot get tea and brandy. Q. 159. "Whether, if our ladies drank sage or balm-tea out of Irish ware (Bishop Berkeley was an Irishman your readers will remember) it would be an insupportable national calamity?" Q. 156. "Whether, if people must poison themselves, they had not better do it with their own growth?"—In concluding this head of my letter, I have one question seriously to put to you, to which I should wish to have an explicit answer. The extract which you first copied from my pamphlet, in the pamphlet begins thus, "That the examination of the truth of the opinion of the French economists, that agriculture is the only source of wealth, &c." In your extract you have omitted the words "of the French eco-

nomists," and only these, in an extract of five pages. What could be your motive for this omission? I cannot bring myself to believe that it was for the purpose of making this extract square with your insinuation, that I was copying from you: but, I confess I cannot easily account for it on any other supposition. On this point, therefore, I must request an explanation from you, and I shall be glad if it prove satisfactory.—Notwithstanding the above host of evidence proving it is not probable I should copy from you, opinions maintained above 2000 years by authors without number, it is not unlikely, as you are a pertinacious gentleman, but you will still insist that I have drawn my sentiments from your secondary fountain; and, as you have given extracts from your Register to prove this idea, it requires some notice. You are right in your conjecture, that I am in the habit of reading your weekly publication. I have seen it for about 3 years at a news' room; not, however, constantly, for my occasional absences from home have frequently prevented my reading it for months together. Amongst much of your publication that I approved, and much that I disapproved, I was of course gratified to see you now and then, advancing opinions similar to my own, on the subjects of my pamphlet; but, I confess, it never struck me that you had established your doctrine in such an argumentative and logical way, as to preclude their further discussion: and, as I can with truth say, that I am not conscious of being indebted to you for one single idea advanced in my publication, it certainly never entered into my head that there was any necessity for adverting to the circumstance of your having maintained similar doctrines; especially, as I had no reason for supposing them original with you, any more than with myself. But to proceed to your extracts. The one which alone has any such similarity with a parallel passage of mine, as to justify even a suspicion of plagiarism, is that in which you argue on like grounds with me, that the revenue is indebted for the duty paid on tea, not to the East India Company, but to the consumers of that article. The similarity here, is merely accidental. Most assuredly, I never saw the passage quoted in your Register, when it was originally published; for if I had, its accordance with my own opinions would have fixed it in my memory; whereas it was perfectly new to me. But even if I had seen it when first published, as it was an illustration which had occurred to me years before, I should not have scrupled to make use of it as my own. You surely will not pretend that an idea, which

you say is so obvious, that it must have struck the most stupid of the human race, is one which might not have occurred to two persons meditating on the same question.— You say, too, that you have long ago advanced the arguments which I employ to show that the nation does not get rich by the East India trade. This may probably be the case, though I was not aware of it; and you do not point out the passages in your Register, where your opinions on this head are to be found. But you must see, that my fixing upon the *East India trade* to show that we do not get rich by import commerce, was merely, because, as in that trade, we exchange bullion for a luxury, the chain of argument is more simple. I might just as well have instanced the Baltic trade, or the Turkey trade; and, in that case, I suppose you would not have pretended that I was indebted to you for my arguments.—On the remainder of your parallel extracts, I shall be very brief. You give two of the 6th and 20th Dec. 1806. I have only to say, that my pamphlet was *written* in November 1806. You may be made sure of this, either by inquiring of the printer, who had it in his hands in the beginning of Jan. 1807; or, by the internal evidence of the fact at pages 2 and 82, where the conquest of Buenos Ayres is spoken of as a recent transaction, and the sugar distillery question as being then under the consideration of parliament. But, your last extract is the greatest curiosity. This, you say, contains *multum in parvo*, the sum and substance of all my publication; and you verily believe is more calculated to work conviction than my elaborate arguments. All very probable, my good Sir; but what, in the name of consistency and of common sense, had become of your eyes when you adduced this extract as a proof of plagiarism? Surely you must have been sleeping. Why. Sir, your extract was published on the 22d August, and my pamphlet was published on the 3d of the same month, that is, *three weeks before*!!! Who is the plagiarist now, Mr. Cobbett? Your *multum in parvo* extract, the *source* of all the arguments in a pamphlet published *three weeks before* it! Admirable logic to be sure! You see the anachronism of making Aristotle steal from you, is not without authority. You will say, perhaps, you were ignorant of the date of the publication of my pamphlet. This I cannot help. It was your business before you brought forward a charge of plagiarism, to have consulted the documents which would have given you the requisite information. If you had looked into the newspapers of the 3d August, you would have seen an

advertisement which would have prevented your committing yourself, in the way you have done. In this matter I can lay claim to greater liberality. I was actually asked by a friend, on the appearance of your extract, if I did not think you had stolen your ideas from me. But I, knowing that you had maintained similar opinions before, and moreover, that nothing is more easy than for two writers to stumble on the same ideas, gave no countenance to the supposition. So much for my defence against your charges. I have been obliged to enter into a detail, which I dare say will be as tiresome to your readers to peruse, as it has been to me to write; but the impossibility of compressing into smaller space, the explanations which your insinuations seemed to call for, must plead my excuse for this prolixity.—While I have the pen in my hand, I may as well say a word or two, in reply to the objections which you have thrown out against some of the subordinate parts of my reasoning. You treat as absurd, the idea of the government maintaining those who may be thrown out of employment by the loss of our foreign export trade, and occupying them in public works. You must recollect that I recommend this, only, "until a demand from new branches of industry shall have caused for them independent and profitable employment." You admit they must be supported in some way, and the question therefore is, whether this burthen had better be defrayed by the nation at large, employing them in public works that are wanted, or be thrown upon particular parishes that could not find employment for the poor. Your position, that roads, canals and other public works should never be undertaken, until they can be profitably undertaken, seems to me very untenable. But it is impossible to enter into this subject here. You say also, that I am in error in supposing that hemp and flax could be grown upon waste land. This I never meant to say, but merely, as you have better expressed my ideas, that corn might be grown upon waste land, and hemp and flax upon the rich land now appropriated to corn. But these productions will grow freely upon *bog-land*, and there are many hundred thousand acres of this, unreclaimed in Great Britain and Ireland. (See Young's Annals of Agriculture, the last No.)—Two of your correspondents have honoured me with their remarks. To both I can only say, that if they had read the whole pamphlet in question, they would have found their difficulties, which are occasioned by having seen detached passages of it only, attempted to be resolved. The polite expressions, however,

and sensible remarks of W. F. S. deserve more attention; and, I beg to recommend to his notice, and to that of all your readers who may doubt of the possibility of finding employment for the manufacturers that may be thrown out of employment by the loss of foreign trade, the following passage of Mr. Hume. It occurs in his essay on commerce. "When the affairs of the society are once brought to this situation, a nation may lose most of its foreign trade, and yet continue a great and powerful people. If strangers will not take any particular commodity of ours, we must cease to labour in it. The same hands will turn themselves towards some refinement in other commodities which may be wanted at home, and there must always be materials for them to work upon; till every person in the state who possesses riches, enjoys as great plenty of home commodities, and those in as great perfection as he desires; which can never possibly happen. China is represented as one of the most flourishing countries in the world; though it has very little commerce beyond its own territories."—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,—WILLIAM SPENCE.

Drypool, Dec. 1, 1807.

CAPTAIN SCOTT.

Sir—You will much oblige me by inserting in your paper, for the satisfaction of others, the following letter, which I have authority to say, is the truest account that has been received of the loss of the Boreas. The kind and mindful testimony of Sir James Saumarez to the character of my beloved and deeply lamented brother, so worthy of a British seaman, lays me under the most lasting obligations to that gallant and distinguished officer.—I am, &c. WILLIAM SCOTT.—Serjeant's Inn, Dec. 7, 1807.

"*Inconstant*, in Guernsey Road, Nov. 29.—Sir; It is with the deepest regret I have to acquaint you, for the information of the lords commissioners of the Admiralty, that his Majesty's ship Boreas, in standing towards this island yesterday evening, about 6 o'clock, run upon the Hannois Rock, the wind at the time blowing very hard at N. E.—I received information of this unfortunate event about 2 o'clock this morning, and immediately sent orders to the Brilliant and Jamaica (which had arrived from Spithead the preceding day, with the Rebuff gun brig) the Britannia cutter, and one of the Government scouts, to proceed off the Hannois, and afford her every assistance; their Lordships will be very much concerned to be informed, that on the tide's flowing, the ship

overset, and became a complete wreck, at about two o'clock; and I am truly grieved to be obliged to add, that captain Scott, with the officers and men, except those mentioned in the inclosed list where lost with the ship; lieut. Berwick (second lieut.), with lieut. Wilson, of the Royal Marines, and 6 men, were sent off in the gig, and landed in the western part of the island; and about 50 others in the launch and large cutter, were also landed, and the boats returned to the ship, but have not been heard of, and there is every reason to fear were lost on nearing her—Through the great exertions of lieut. colonel Sir Thomas Saumarez, in collecting the pilots and boatmen in the vicinity of Rorquains, about 30 seamen and marines were taken off the Rock of the Hannois at day light, which I fear are the whole that have been saved.—The greatest praise appears to be due to captain Scott, and all his officers and men, for their steadiness and good conduct, under such perilous circumstances, in a dark and tempestuous night, in the midst of the most dangerous rocks that can be conceived; and I have most sincerely to lament the loss of so many brave officers and men who have perished on this most melancholy occasion.—Capt. Scott has been long upon this station, and has always shewn the greatest zeal and attachment for his Majesty's service, and in him particularly, his country meets a great loss, being a most valuable and deserving officer. I am, Sir, &c. (Signed) Js. SAUMAREZ.—*To the Hon. W. W. Pole, Secretary to the Admiralty.*

WASTE LANDS.

SIR,—I should not so soon have intruded upon you, had I not thought it necessary to mention something relative to my letters, which you have done me the honour of inserting in your Register. You brought forward in the whole, four letters of mine; the first of these, p. 338, was upon the Internal Situation of Ireland; the second, p. 439, through mistake was also entitled Ireland's Internal Situation; the 3d and 4th letters were numbered 2d and 3d. If you will have the goodness to peruse my second letter again, you will, I doubt not, think that England's waste lands would have been more apposite than the title given to that letter. I mention these errors, because I imagine, that in consequence of them my second letter may be passed over; and I am undoubtedly, very anxious that this should

not happen; for, I am in hopes that what I have said of the *advantages to be derived from bringing into cultivation a greater breadth of land in this kingdom*, may induce some person of abilities, or what is of more consequence, some person in power, to write upon the subject of waste lands, or to bring the matter once more forward in parliament. When I addressed my second letter to you, I was not aware that Sir John Sinclair (while President of the Board of Agriculture), contrived to get something like a general inclosure bill, passed through the House of Commons, which was thrown out by the House of Lords.—Mr. Hobhouse, a member of parliament, in a letter which may be found in the Ninth Vol. of the Bath Agricultural Society's Papers, states this, with other circumstances, well worth notice.—I am, &c.—M. H.—Oct. 30, 1807.

P. S. Without doubt my letters are very incorrect as to language. I shall point out two considerable errors which may render my meaning unintelligible, in p. 625 line 25, instead of 'discontinued' it should be read 'continued.' In p. 627 line 47, read 'without the smallest partiality' instead of 'impartiality.'

IRELAND.

SIR,—If your correspondent Mentor has proved, that if Ireland was conquered by Buonaparté, England might be invaded from the several points mentioned in Mentor's letter, I should in that case be inclined to think, England could not hold out against such a variety of attacks for any length of time. All I have now to say is, that Britons would no doubt do their duty under the most trying circumstances. However, I have no dread that it should ever fall to their lot to defend their country against their Irish fellow subjects leagued with the French. The Irish may feel their having been neglected; some may have erred when one half the world was in error, but all are now too wise not to make a common cause with England. The blindness of England in not promoting her own interest, by acting justly towards Ireland, but, on the contrary, denying her the enjoyment of those benefits freely granted to the whole of Great Britain, has in my mind, been chiefly owing to the mass of Englishmen being as little acquainted with the real state of Ireland, as of the real state of China. From what Mentor has said, I presume in this we are agreed. It often occurred to me, that could I have an opportunity of pointing

out to my countrymen, what I knew of that part of the British empire, I should be able to plant in their minds as anxious a desire to promote the happiness of every individual in the Sister Kingdom as I have myself; and, I must here declare, that I do not recollect to have met with one Englishman well acquainted with the misfortunes under which the Irish labour, that would not have lent his aid to have relieved them from their burthens. With the ideas before mentioned, I began my first letter to you, not expecting that my own words would appear in print, but hoping that you might from time to time bring forward those facts concerning Ireland, which I designed to put you in possession of. I am now sanguine enough to hope that my countrymen without exception, will throw off that jealousy towards Ireland, so unworthy of them, and that in future they will be solicitous that all parts of the United Empire should prosper.—I am, &c.—M. H.—Nov. 19, 1807.

IRISH TYTHES.

SIR,—I take the liberty of sending you an extract from a letter I have just received from a friend of mine, upon whose judgment and fidelity I place the greatest reliance, who has lately returned from a tour in Ireland. He says, “I found the climate in the south western part of Ireland very mild and salubrious, so much so, indeed, that I was half inclined to remain there, and probably should have done so, had it not been for the alarming state that country is in. You cannot conceive any thing more deplorably wretched than the state of the Irish peasantry. No one who has seen them, can wonder at their being ready to join in any plan that can hold forth the hope of a change, which must be always desirable to those who cannot change for the worse. Moloch’s argument, “what can be worse,” is completely applicable to their present state, and there is no want of Moloch’s to urge it. I could write volumes about them, for I have seldom been more interested by any subject; but, you will probably hear enough of it when the House meets again, in consequence of these petitions against the Tything system, the grievances of which would be comparatively little felt, if Irish landlords lived on their own estates, and exacted only a moderate rent from their tenants; but as an Irish postboy remarked to me, when I asked him why they left such holes in the road, “it is easiest and cheapest to mend the best part, and leave the worst as it is.” So the country gentlemen will find it easier and cheaper to rob the

clergy, than to correct the abuses by which their own pockets are filled.”—Leaving you, Sir, to make what use you think fit of these reflections, of a very sensible man on so interesting a subject.—I remain, &c.—A.D. MORRICE.—Nov. 20, 1807.

POOR LAWS.

SIR,—After seeing my letter of the 10th instant, in your Register of Saturday last, (p. 650) chequered, caricatured in Italics, and pared away, as it there appeared, *ad libitum*, for to suit your own purpose, I had almost resolved to desert the correspondence. Lest you should, however, be disposed to construe this into turning my back upon you, I shall not yet do so without first giving you my reasons; and then you are welcome to take it all in your own way.—Mr. Cobbett, I cannot help remarking, and I think it is not without good reason, that you are the most disingenuous controversialist I have ever met with. Your manners bring to my mind, the behaviour of a blustering troublesome fellow at a mess, who cares nought about driving his elbows into his neighbours sides, and when he receives a hint of the propriety of keeping them nearer his own, he complains of it as “a personal reflection.” If an explanation be offered he will not hear it, but seemingly conscious that his ranting and declamation are better adapted for the entertainment of the company, he prefers immensely a cavilling altercation to any thing else, whether in the shape of an answer or an argument. My letter, I know, was altogether of little or no importance; it is the first, however, that I have observed you give a partial publication to. But, to have committed the whole of it to the press “would have been a mere waste of paper.” The excuse I admit is weighty, and would be quite satisfactory, were it not a little suspicious from the circumstance of its being rather too convenient for yourself, and forming a bad precedent for the future, when you have a mind to conceal any thing you do not wish should come to light. Let me ask you, Mr. Cobbett, if it is acting fairly with Sawney, that after a charge of a rude and vexatious nature is made against him, viz. that he indulges in personal reflections, he is not to be heard in his own defence? Aspersions are wantonly cast upon his country, but a direct confutation of them must not be permitted; if he attempt to expound the reason why you have been feeding our southern neighbours with erroneous prejudices against his countrymen, of which, God knows, they have already

know to contend with ; and if he would uncover the head of the wily depredator, in order to show the vulpine species he belongs to, all, all must be refused insertion for another, but doubt—increasing reason, that “ they are the mere effusions of wit and politeness ? ” This sort of ridicule is truly becoming the man of genius and elegant deportment, whose wit is not more brilliant than ready. Only observe his inimitable address, when he finds that a kiln-dried story about rabbits, (which by the bye, *for aught I know*, as Mr. Cobbett, sometimes very shrewdly observes, may be a figure of his own imagination. *Knowing well as I do*, that he is a great *economist* of historical facts, and accuracies) when he finds his joke about rabbits suited only to amuse other animals, such like for their long ears, with a nonchalance peculiarly graceful he winds it round, and makes it apply to the smallest creatures imaginable, so that the risible faculties shall not, upon any account escape being most delicately tickled. Most facetiously too, he quotes logical aphorisms in the Scottish dialect ; although he has just as perfect an understanding of it, as a grey gander has of Italian music. And then his politeness the less that is said on this subject the better. But, in the name of candour, why have you, Mr. Cobbett, so grossly misrepresented my observations ? Where have I made the smallest allusion to the increase of population as you would have it, either in England or Scotland ? It is surprising enough that, besides waste of paper, you should have given yourself the trouble of answering so acutely what never stood betwixt us as a matter of dispute. And, then, what I have said you twist and turn into a meaning my words do not by any means warrant. In short, to argue with you, is like trying to seize an eel by the tail ; although it is at the same time a matter of little difficulty to hold you in another way ; for, your rapacity gives to every one a sufficient opportunity. With regard to the Caledonian Canal, which one would suppose you must have, by this time, rummaged to the very bottom, I have only to say, that I am ready to prove your statement enormously incorrect. As soon as I have reason to expect that I am to be heard, I am also ready to point out to you a number of the innumerable grants made out of the Exchequer to the people of England ; and far be it from me to do so, with the intent of reproaching them for these things. You state that the people of England have been insulted by the Scotch, but how, for my life, I cannot yet comprehend. However, I am ready to prove, that not only has money

been extracted from the public funds to build churches, but depositaries for gewgaw, porcupines, and water serpents ; not only earth and stone, but fire and water have combined to draw liberally on the national purse, in favour of the people of Old England. Perhaps, Mr. Cobbett will reply, that these, like St. Pauls, were paid for by the people of England themselves. Mr. Cobbett, surely, will not deny, that the money is, in the first place, put down into a column titled the Disbursements of the Nation, which, in the course of a short but certain process, comes to be called the National Debt, and which at last is supported by the payment of interest, and redeemed, if ever redeemed, (honourably, I mean,) by the people of England and Scotland together, without exemption or discrimination. But, what is the use of argument to such a harlequin reasoner as you are ? I like to see fair jockeyship well enough, but you have stole a post upon me, and unless you start again, run fair, and keep the course, it is the last time you shall ever hear from, your humble servant—SAWNEY.—Peterhead, Oct. 31, 1807.

THE BASIS OF RIGHT, AND THE RIGHT OF CONQUEST.

SIR ;—I have long held it as an opinion, that whatever may be the degree of pleasure or profit which writing for the public may yield to individuals, there is an inconsistency in themselves, a general perverseness of public disposition or defect of public understanding, which renders the labour of no public utility. Still, Sir, we had better, in my opinion, amuse ourselves with what would unite public good with private interest or amusement under more favourable circumstances, than with what has no such tendency in any state of private and public intelligence and virtue. Under this impression, and this impression only, I have frequently intruded myself upon your notice, on the subject of political economy ; and under this impression and no other I now again take the liberty of arresting your attention on the subject of the controversy in which you are involved with the editor of the Whig, and others of tried consistency, ability, and sincerity, in the cause of affected justice and humanity, and in which I think, you are unfortunately involved, supposing union to be of any utility ; because, when leaders do not agree, their followers are naturally divided and bewildered. Sir, you have asserted, with an apparent air of triumph that the editor of the Whig has not answered the arguments by which you have attempted

to establish the principle of power as the basis of our rights. The Jews, Sir, to this very day assert that the promised Messiah has not come, and for no other reason than because he did not make his appearance with that partiality towards themselves, with which their narrow love of power and dominion taught them to expect he was to descend among men. Just so, in my opinion, it is with you, Sir, you do not believe that your arguments are answered, because they have not been answered in the express terms, or on the exact principles on which your similar attachment to your own prejudices led you to expect they would be answered, and therefore like the Jews, you persist in your error, and reason as if your arguments were unanswerable. To me, Sir, they are far from being so; for they appear to me as resting themselves upon a confusion of ideas, as distinct from each other, as the shield is from the head it protects; namely, the basis on which our rights are founded and the means we have of defending them: —the first of which I assume to be fellow feeling, and the second power. But, before I proceed to the proof of this confusion, I shall offer a few remarks upon the arguments by which you confound the ideas. You charge the editor of the Whig with not having "taken time sufficiently to discriminate between the rights and liberties of individuals and the rights and liberties of nations." As nations are made up of individuals, and are, relatively considered, themselves individuals, I believe it is out of your power to shew that nations do possess or can possess any other rights or liberties, than the rights and liberties of the individuals of whom they are composed. If you cannot, all the conclusions which you have drawn from a distinction of rights to liberties fall of themselves to the ground. "Individuals" you say "all consent to surrender a part of their rights; to put their natural rights into a common stock, whence in well regulated states each draws an equal share and enjoys it on conditions common to all. But it is impossible that any such compact should exist among nations who have no common stock of rights and liberties; who have no common government; who have no general head; who acknowledge no sovereign, who appeal to no arbiter but the sword, and with whom conquest confers the best possible right of dominion." A most charming climax!!! No common stock, no common government, &c. &c.!!! But stop, Sir, as it would be sheer nonsense to say that men have surrendered rights

which they have only invested in a common stock and drawn out again in equal shares, is not the conclusion irresistible, that individuals, and for the reason stated, nations, have not surrendered any right or liberty whatever that ever nature gave them? If it be, all the conclusions which you have drawn from the surrender of rights as well as those you infer from a distinction of them, are mere Will o'the Wisps engendered only in the vapours of minds whose disorder'd state reduces all principles to chaos. But granting for the sake of argument that individuals have surrendered a part of their natural rights, nations as individuals you admit have not, and even if they have, like the individuals of which they are formed, there is a part which you admit they have not surrendered, and what is this part, Sir, but a common stock, the common stock of equal rights to that portion of the four elements, or their productions, which we find necessary to promote that happiness which is our being, end and aim; and which a God who is no respecter of persons, who only regards principles and actions, must have intended for man without any regard to the distinction of country, colour, or clime. If this be not the part of their natural rights which the human race have not surrendered, and if it be not a common stock, pray what is the common stock, and that part of their natural rights which they have not surrendered? If you cannot tell, and I venture to predict that you cannot, by what right do you assume the Dominion of the Seas, and therefore the privilege of putting your equals in right upon a short allowance of water? You have answer'd, by the right of conquest "which confers the best possible right to dominion." But with submission, Sir, I question if the strength of your prejudices in favour of one part of mankind, and, therefore, the force of your coolness towards the other, have permitted you to take time sufficiently to discriminate between the rights of conquest and the rights of nature. Nature you will admit has given us as a right, the portion of the four elements above stated, and liberty to enjoy them, and when either is invaded, contrary to the laws of fellow feeling in the case, the same nature gives us a right not only to reconquer them, but to take as much more from the invader, as will make good the loss we have sustained by his invasion and expulsion. This being all that conquest can give us on the principles of moral justice, it necessarily follows; I. that conquest confers no right at all to dominion, because our right to the conquered dominion is given us by the rights of

nature before the conquest was made; and II. that to justify your dominion of the Seas, you must either shew that you had an original and exclusive right to that dominion, or that you acquired it in virtue of your right to renumerate yourself for the loss you have sustained by the invasion of others, of the Americans, for instance, of that part of the dominion to which you are entitled by the rights of nature. I believe, Sir, you are not prepared to shew any such things; on the contrary, such are my opinions of the good qualities of your heart and understanding, that there is nothing required to obtain from you a generous confession of your error, but that some one of my numberless superiors in the gift of discovering principles and art of applying them, should take up the subject upon those rights of nature which you do yourself admit have not been surrendered by your brethren of mankind in any capacity in which they can be considered as free agents. In hopes, then, that the subject will be so taken up by abler talents than mine, and that when it is so taken by them, you will, for the sake of your own consistency and to do as much as in you lies to restore peace to a butchered and distracted world, either give up the exclusive dominion of the Seas or place your right to maintain it upon some other basis than your "power to hold a mastery over all that swims upon them," — I will proceed to prove that your arguments as to the basis of right are founded upon confusion of ideas which ought not to be confounded when the establishment of such basis is the subject in question. Emblematic figures, Sir, have been invented to impress their subjects with greater force upon the mind; and one of them is represented blindfolded holding a sword in the right hand and a balance in the left; of what is this figure an emblem, Sir? Is it of policy standing upon the principle of self preservation slaughtering the Danes, burning and sacking their capital because it was a matter of fact or probability that they would join with the civilized world in settling the dispute, whether the Sea is or is not "the highway of nations," the common stock of all that can swim on it? No, Sir. Is it an emblem of power standing upon the principle of right, majestically insolent and capricious, taking it upon herself to settle this dispute; to measure the world and weigh the air to the rest of mankind, just as her notions of self interest may direct? No, Sir, it is the emblem of a being or attribute who cannot distinguish friends from foes, brethren from countrymen, or countrymen from foreigners, in its distribution

of rights; and that being is Justice standing upon the most firm of all basis fellow feeling, indiscriminately dividing the Seas equally between all that can swim on them or in them, balancing the rights of man with the one hand, and holding power in the other, not as their basis or origin, but as their guardian and protecting shield. Look at this figure, Sir, and say, if you can, that I have charged you falsely with mistaking power for fellow feeling as the basis of right: look at this emblem, Sir, and shew us the principle, if you can, on which the dominion of the Seas can become the exclusive right "of those who can hold a mastery over all that swims on them." But, above all, look at it, Sir, and inform us, if you are able, how your country is to retrieve her character for honour and magnanimity, and avoid the contempt and wretchedness which awaits her from an outraged and exasperated world, in consequence of her deliberate, malicious, and cold blooded murder and robbery of the Danes. Nay, Sir, for once do take your stand upon the basis of fellow feeling, and place yourself in the situation of these unfortunate victims of your country's power, and then say, if you dare, that such another transaction ever disgraced the annals either of the civilized or uncivilized world; that power can be admitted for a moment as the basis of right, but in minds harbouring darkness visible, despair and revenge, ghastly plotting the means of expelling from the human character that sympathy and attachment which alone uplifts man above the level of the most ferocious brute of the whole animal creation. — C. S. Nov. 14th 1807.

SINKING FUND.

[Being C. S.'s Sixth Letter, which is particularly recommended to the serious consideration of the land and stock-holders, merchants and traders of the United Kingdom.]

SIR; — In the Register of the 14th instant, your correspondent, Osgur of Leinster, "ventures to suggest a doubt, that my conclusions are not quite certain as to the increase of taxes, depreciation of money, and sevenfold ruin which is to result from the liquidation of the National Debt by means of the Sinking Fund." His doubt is founded upon a notion, which, if it be truly just, is really new, that one million without any interest, mind ye, may discharge a debt of 600 millions, without either increasing its quantity or depreciating the value of the circulating capital. On the subject of the Sinking Fund, I have to

charge Osgur either with a neglect or design in dragging out my conclusions before your readers, and leaving behind the curtain those of Mr. Pitt and Lord H. Petty. Had Osgur a design in doing this? Was he sorry that I brought forward these eminent financiers in evidence against themselves? Has he an interest in the perpetuity of error on this subject? Is it truly a neglect? or, does he really want information, and think me the most likely to give it him? In this thought he shall not be disappointed as far as my humble abilities can be of service. But, as it would be losing the advantages of the best of evidences, in support of my conclusions, to keep out of sight, on any occasion, the picture which Mr. Pitt and Lord H. Petty drew of the Sinking Fund as far as their view of it went, I shall beg leave, again, to bring it forward, as stated under my signature in the Register of the 19th last September. "When the Sinking Fund was established," says Lord H. Petty, "Mr. Pitt foresaw the inconvenience and mischief which might arise from the extinguishing, at once, of a very large portion of the National Debt. If the two Sinking Funds had been allowed to accumulate to their full extent, this mischief would have followed, that at one and the same time, an immense capital would be destroyed. In fact, by returning all their capital to the holders of stock, capital itself would cease to be of value, and the nation might be nearly ruined, by that which at first sight might appear to great advantage. However paradoxical it might sound, he considered that the sudden extinction of the National Debt would be an evil amounting almost to a national bankruptcy. It was not merely that the stock-holders would only find themselves materially distressed by having all their capital returned to them at once, at a time when no employment could be found for such an immense capital, but all those who are employed in trade would find the mischief of it. Their fair and reasonable profits would be destroyed, and all their advantages of no avail, if such an immense capital were all at once thrown upon the market, and they were exposed to such competition that would not allow them either to buy their goods at the same price, nor to enjoy the same profits; for the stock-holders, in such case, not knowing how to employ their capital to advantage, would be most formidable competitors. It was for these reasons that he stated that the sudden extinction of the National Debt,

" would not only be a most serious injury to the stock-holders, but to the trading part of the community; and that it would produce the greatest and most extensive mischief and calamity." Unquestionably, they must be very ignorant, indeed, of the effects of competition and capital, who can doubt the extent of the mischief and calamity that must result from the competition of a capital of 600 millions, with a capital of only 100 millions; even admitting, to justify my conclusions, that Lord Sidmouth, in taking the national income, or circulating capital, at 80 millions, undervalued it to the amount of 20 millions. This is the very best principle on which the subject can be placed. Talk to a nation of shopkeepers about competition and the consequent advanced price at which they are obliged to buy their goods, and the low profits at which they are compelled to sell them, and they will understand you; but go to principle and fact, and say that it is not the goods that advanced in price, but money that is depreciated in value, owing, as they well understand, with respect to goods, to the great influx of its quantity, and, if they do not laugh at your folly, they will be as wise as owls, or as civil as a Billingsgate in their reply. Money depreciated, jacobin? is not a shilling a shilling, and was it ever more? In name, Solomon, it was not, but in substance and use, it was; for the time has been when the pound weight of silver was only coined into 20s., but now there is 62s. taken out of it; and about a century ago it would buy you about four quartern loaves, but till lately, and for many years back, it could not furnish you with one. Now then, you that will set the Thames on fire, and let you, money has not only lost two-thirds of its intrinsic worth, since the reign of Edward I., but also three-fourths of its exchangeable value since that of William III., when a paper-money manufactory was established to support the speculations of merchants, and to supply the demands of the National Debt and Sinking Fund. And you cannot deny it, but by proving that with an increasing population their means of subsistence have decreased in the proportion of three-fourths; and that you cannot prove, were you to set the Thames on fire a thousand times over. But to return. As Mr. Pitt rests the calamities of the Sinking Fund on its ability to discharge the National Debt all at once, and, by so doing, leaving no time or opportunity to the stock-holders to employ their capital without "serious injury to themselves, and "to the trading part of the community,"

the inuendo falls upon the progressive dribbling manner in which his consummate knowledge of finance, allows the Sinking Fund to extinguish the debt, and so to furnish the time and opportunity to the stock-holders of which the sudden extinction of the debt would deprive them. This negative assertion, like all his positions, proceeds either from intentional imposition, or a crude and indigested knowledge of his subject, and is equally unsupported by either principle or argument. He has left us to guess how *time* is to give the stock-holders an opportunity to employ their capital, however small the driblets in which they may receive it, without "a serious injury to themselves and the trading part of the community," which is the whole of it in one way or other. And as he has so left us, I deny the conclusion which he draws from time; but not like him without the shadow of an argument or principle. It is by an extention of national trade, I assume that the stock-holders can employ their capital without "a serious injury to themselves and the trading part of the community." I deny the possibility of this extension; and I deny it upon the clear and comprehensive ground, that if, as Pitt usually gulled his vacant admirers with, we are in possession of the commerce of the world, or, if we are not, that the determination of Europe and America to prevent our having more of it than we have, or to put us to an expense in securing it that will amount to more than its profits, there is no room left in the world for the stock-holders to employ a shilling of their capital without "injuring themselves and the trading part of the community," in the proportion in which that shilling must depreciate the exchangeable value of the circulating capital. On the proof of the falsehood of this ground, or, that the stock-holders, by having time allowed them to look about, may find, within the limits of our own dominions, the means of employing their capital "without injury to themselves and the trading part of the community," turns every thing that can be said in favour of the Sinking Fund, now that the extensive calamities of a sudden extinction of the debt is admitted on all hands. And to whom can we look for this proof but to men of learning, figures, and character. Let me ask, then, will John M'Arthur, Esq, who has arrived at the honour of doctor of laws, as the reward of his financial labours, prove the falsehood of this ground? Will the editor of the Edinburgh Review, who accused you with uttering trash upon this subject, prove it? Will Sir Francis

Baring and Henry Thornton, Esq. who have written *so ably* on the subject of paper currency, prove it? Will the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan, who, at your expense, Sir, displayed his tender regard for public faith and public credit, prove it, and shew how it can be said that faith is kept with the public when the depreciation of the money, issued by town and country banks, robs the stock-holder of the bread which he promised to himself from the interest of his capital? And finally will the doctors who made doctor M'Arthur a doctor, and who would make you a doctor too if you would but write what you do not understand yourself, and what no body else can understand; and who will allow you to have no learning at all, because you will, perversely, have it that useful learning consists of living ideas and not of dead words,—join talents with their infant doctor and his veteran colleagues in the dry and thorny field of finance, and shew by clear, distinct, and unsophisticated proofs, if, even, we could command every shilling's worth of the commerce of the world, that the capital of the national debt, added to the circulating capital of the world would not ruin the world itself, in the proportion in which the addition of the one capital must depreciate the value of the other. These are the points on which the merits of the Sinking Fund turn themselves, now that it is admitted that the sudden extinction of the National Debt would depreciate the value of the circulating capital. For my own part, therefore, my mind is made up to take no other notice whatever of what may be hereafter said, by ignorance or design, to conceal, from its victims, the insurmountable, by human power, calamities of the Sinking Fund, than to move these previous questions. With this expression of my determination, I might, as a man and a fellow subject, thank you for the patriotic exertions you have made use of, and not unsuccessfully time will prove, to expose this impostor, not only to your tortured country but a tormented world and bid you for ever adieu on its subject. But as Osgur may labour under a mistake, and as I have promised him all the information in my power, I will, with your permission, quote him, and endeavour upon his own plausible principle, I will grant, to remove the grounds of his "repeated doubts." "If," says he, "one million be drawn out of the circulating capital of 100 millions, that capital is thereby reduced to 99; and if the sinking fund applies the said one million in discharge of so much of the debt of 600 millions, then is the debt reduced to 599, and the

“ one million is returned into the circulating capital which had been reduced by the tax to 99 millions. Of course the circulating capital is restored to its previous total of 100 millions ; but I doubt if it be thereby increased or depreciated.” —I. Sir, as he has not explained himself I presume that he means a real increase ; and, presuming this, I must infer, that he is not aware that money may be nominally as well as really increased ; and therefore that a nominal increase or diminution of its quantity has the same effect upon the exchangeable value of the real money, that a real increase or decrease of its quantity would have. Being aware of this indisputable fact, it never made a question with me, any more than with Mr. Pitt, what real increase the liquidation of the debt might make in the circulating capital. All we contend for is, that it must nominally increase to the amount of the capital of the debt ; and, therefore, that the depreciation must be in the proportion which the capital of the debt bears to the circulating capital. And we contend for the nominal increase on the well ascertained ground, that if we send the same identical ten pounds for instance ten times to market and back again in one day, we have nominally sent £100 to it in that day and therefore depreciated the value of the money as much in the market as if we had sent and brought back again £100 at one time. On this principle, and for the sake of argument, I grant that the national debt may be discharged without making any real increase in the circulating capital, but, then, I must insist upon the equality of the depreciation in both cases, or deny the principle itself ; and that I cannot do while reason enough is left me not to deny the evidence of my senses. II. By the manner in which he expresses himself it would appear that while the circulating capital is in the act of discharging the national debt in the money market, there is a proportional scarcity of it in the corn market, for instance, and, therefore, that whatever proportion of value money may lose on the stock exchange owing to its influx, it gains it in Mark Lane owing to its reflux ; and so makes no change in the value of money, because, like every thing else, in demand, it will find its own level. This is plausible, but it is false ; it may be admitted, it must be admitted, in millions of instances, that those from whom the money is taken to redeem the debt, cannot go to the corn market to buy bread, at least to buy but very little ; but, then it cannot be denied that those who sell the debt and receive the money for it do go ; and, therefore, it is ignorance to conceive

or assert that the capital is ever out of one market and in the other. Like the blood in our veins, it is perpetually on the round ; and as that blood, when agitated by exertion swells and produces a fever, so does the velocity of the motion given to the circulating capital by the combined force of the funding system, sinking fund, and the wants of the community swell its amounts and depreciate its exchangeable value, and throw the social body into a fever. III. If I understand his notion at all, it is but the old notion revived, namely, that the national debt, either in its accumulation or liquidation is but taking the money out of the one pocket and putting it into the other. To remove in whole or in part, the consummate ignorance which so generally and fatally prevails on this subject, the argument cannot be placed upon a better principle than this. It is exactly what vulgar minds want, it is just what is required by the absence of mind of those who have no disposition to cultivate knowledge upon this subject, and who ignorantly look forward to the principles of government as a remedy to the evils which result from ignorance of political economy. Laying it down as a position, as on principles it must be done, that the tax-gatherer's pocket forms one of the pockets of every man who has two, and every man must have two before he can turn money from the one to the other, I grant that the transactions amount to no more : but will they admit the paradoxical ground on which I grant it ? Never mind that, they say, it is so. Well, then, but does not the wear and tear of our pockets proportion itself to the friction occasioned by our hands in turning over the money from the one to the other ? This will be granted, but this is not all ; in wearing and tearing our pockets, do we not lose time, which, if otherwise employed might furnish us with something to eat and drink ? (for money is neither an eatable or drinkable, nor yet the means of furnishing them ; nothing but labour can do that.) Woeful experience answers yes—that millions find, that while they are gathering money into their pockets, and turning it over from this one to the other, (for though our wiseacres take no notice of that lost labour, money must be gathered before it can be put in pockets) themselves and families are literally suffering all that life can bear for want of common necessaries : of pockets or any thing to put in them. Now, Sir, if they do not deny the “ test of experience and the “ evidence of facts,” what have they gathered from the admission of their pocketing principle but naked backs and empty bellies ? and if this be all they have gathered, what must

their gatherings be when they consider the time lost by the industrious, for none else gathers any thing, in gathering the 600 millions, which, in rents, profits upon trade, and interest upon money, the stockholders snatched from them, and lent to government, having no use for it themselves? and what will be the amount of their gatherings when 600 millions more is gathered in taxes to enable our *able* financiers to convert the stockholders again into tradesmen? The amount must be great, and cannot be stated at less, whatever be the principle on which the argument is placed, than the sevenfold ruin which Osgur doubts, but which I assert to be in full march to massacre thousands, ruin millions, if not to expel us from the rank of nations, should not power and courage enough be found to annihilate both the funding system and the sinking fund.—Convinced of these facts, Sir, with as much certainty of mind as that I am stating of them; as it is a rule with me, not to represent things as evils to which I see no remedy; and, when I propose my own, to point out the inefficiency, and reason thereof, of what others may consider as remedies; I flatter myself it is not ill-timed to ask, what are the means by which this ruin is to be averted? And to state my objections to the means proposed. Will that great hobby-horse of the Whig party, parliamentary reform, avert it? No; for though parliamentary men are incapable of being bribed from their duty by either place, pension, or title, or of professing the *filial* doctrine "That "things will last our time, and let our children look to themselves," they never studied, apparently, the bearings of these funds upon the vitals of their country; and, therefore they know no more of the remedy than their reforming constituents do of the sinking fund, and who, as already observed, look to the principles of government, and not to the information, virtue, and talents of its administrators, as a remedy to every remediable evil of the state. Will another march to Paris avert it? No; for we made a rampart of Europe to defend Paris by our first march. Will the plunder of Copenhagen avert it? No; for from that meritorious instance of energy, promptness, and decision, we have gained but a trifling negative power, and against it we have to place a strong degree of general indignation and revenge, which time cannot eradicate from the mind of the civilised world, while history records the cold-blooded and cowardly manner in which the booty was seized, and the people murdered; and which, therefore, will certainly diminish more than in-

crease our means of averting it. Will the blockade of the world avert it? No; for that will accustom the world, and happily, too, to content themselves with their own productions, and as they so accustom themselves, so our commerce, the great pillar of our power, will wither and decay. Will the dominion of the seas avert it? No; for, to secure that dominion, would require another national debt as large as the present, and in the bargain, the 8 millions of the national income, which, by lord Sidmouth's statement of it, only remains unabsorbed in taxes, tythes, and poor's rates; and, after all, it would be lost, if all or none we must have. Will the commerce of the world avert it? No; for if we cannot maintain the dominion of the seas, we cannot secure the commerce of the world. In short, will the laws and the institutions which our forefathers handed down to us, and which, therefore, we are determined to hand down to the latest posterity, avert it? No; for our forefathers knew nothing of the evils of a national debt and a sinking fund; and, therefore, they can tell us nothing of their remedies; they knew no more what was hidden in the womb of futurity than the forefathers of the late aristocracy of France did, and they knew nothing; and, therefore, like their posterity, we may be fool-hardy; but, like them, too, we must become exiles and beggars, if the funding system and sinking fund are left to themselves; I mean, pursued. Since, then, on the best evidence of circumstance, were all these great hobby-horses of little-minded great men, run, even to death, they could not avert this sevenfold ruin, by what other means is its progress to be arrested? Do not smile at my folly, Sir, for fear that necessity may compel what reason enjoins. I answer, prove your attachment to social order and religion, and give up your determination to become pirates, if you cannot force your neighbours to trade with you. Take peace with all its consequences. Ask only for your share of the dominion of the seas. Content yourselves with your share of the commerce of the world. Grant no public annuities, places, pensions, or sinecures to any, but such as, from natural inabilities, would become a burthen to the parish if you did not support them. Go back to where your forefathers left you, and teach your population the use of arms. Employ your soldiers and sailors in agriculture, for of tradesmen and mechanics you have more than can live. Suffer the industrious classes to invest their mites of capital in general funds, and so to defend themselves against the overwhelming

power and avarice of corporate bodies and over-wealthy individuals. Prohibit the use of rag money; for it is a dangerous weapon in the hands of ignorant or unprincipled men. Lower your rents, tythes, and taxes. Mend the quality and substance of your manufactures, and undersell the world; and then, your commerce, the object of your domineering and blockading systems, will flourish and grow, while it continues to be human nature to prefer the cheapest and best articles. Convinced with the poet, Sir, that "in pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;" and therefore doubtful that the object will sooner be sacrificed, than give up the particular means adopted to attain it, *the sinking fund and the dominion of the seas*, I am afraid I have asked you in vain not to smile at my folly. But remember, Sir, that those only have a right to do so, who can shew distinctly, that of two evils I chuse the greatest; that the calamities which our modern pursuits and habits of life inseparably connect with this scheme of redemption, sink by comparison those of the sevenfold depreciation of the circulating capital, or, in more familiar terms, sevenfold advanced price of every thing; sevenfold advance of rents, tythes, and taxes; sevenfold increase of paupers, and therefore forty-nine-fold increase of poor's rates, which, from the nature of things, and the confession of Mr. Pitt, it must be admitted, will inevitably result from the sinking fund, if the means cannot be clearly and distinctly pointed out, by which the stockholders are to be enabled to employ their capital without "injuring themselves and the trading part of the community." A sevenfold increase of paupers, and therefore a forty-nine-fold increase of poor's rates must appear incredible to those children only of a larger growth who have the management of our finances, but have not observed, or do not chuse to confess the mathematical exactness with which the increase of paupers proportions itself to the depreciation of the circulating capital; and who, therefore, have no idea of the unerring truth, that when money is reduced to a seventh of its present value, then seven times the present rate must go to support the present 1,200,000 paupers; and therefore, that to maintain seven times this number (8,400,000) the present rate must be multiplied by forty-nine. To this ignorant and mischievous description of infants we have only to say, shew us, either that no real or nominal increase will take place in the circulating capital, as or when the national debt is extinguished; or, if you cannot, that the stockholders will be enabled to

furnish themselves with the means of employing their capital, "without injury to themselves or the trading part of the community," and then we shall confess our error, and give up the point. But, till then, we will maintain it, that in buying up a million of the debt, the commissioners, who are well paid for so doing, purchase a seventh part of a million of wretchedness, and add it to the present calamities of the nation.—C. S.—Nov. 28, 1807.

POOR LAWS.

SIR;—It is incumbent upon me, for the sake of my native country, to return you my respectful, and most sincere thanks for the insertion of my imperfect letter, regarding the "Poor Laws," at p. 496 of this volume; and also to make my acknowledgments for the obliging manner in which you have informed me [p. 754] of the non-arrival of a second letter, on the subject. Your candour and generosity, of which I now experimentally know your real possession, will excuse me for again sending you a copy of nearly what I then wrote; and I hope, by paginal references, sufficiently to obviate the inconvenience which this miscarriage has caused.—The trouble you have taken in our question, shews your wisdom in judging of its consequence. It is a question superlatively fundamental, and important: and both on this account, and in order to rectify some reciprocal misconstructions, which are the unavoidable annoyances of epistolary disquisitions, I again presume to intrude this upon your valuable time. The trouble which I am very sorry you say I caused you, by inverting the order, in my last letter, was caused by my being insensibly, and, as I said, reluctantly led to animadvert upon your reasonings regarding Mr. Whitbread's bill, after giving you an idea of Scotland, which was the main object of my letter. In this, however, I shall strictly follow your order [p. 482.]—I. You deny, Sir, that you have admitted that "vice is the cause of poverty" in the way that I represent it. If you look at my letter, you will see that I meant that you admitted it, in the abstract: and you certainly do so; for [p. 330] you write, "poverty and misery arise from vice. They are, indeed, the natural, and just punishments of vice, in the lower, as well as the higher order of society. Dishonesty, hypocrisy, laziness, and insolence are followed by a loss of confidence, and regard; these by a loss of

“ employment and profit ; and these by “ poverty and misery.” Well, then, after these expressions, it cannot be denied, that you admit it, in the abstract. What you deny is, that the poverty of the people of England has proceeded from their vice. “ To me [said I, p. 499] it would appear “ that the peasantry” [meaning English, Scotch, and Irish] “ are the only order “ which the taxes do not affect.” In support of this opinion, I stated, in the first place, that Scotland and England are equally severely taxed ; and yet that the former is flourishing, and prosperous. You endeavour to sap this argument, by saying that it depends on “ my own observation, which, “ in all probability, is confined to a small “ part of Scotland.” But you know, now, Sir, that I am not confined by “ the care “ of a school !” and although my age be what it is, yet I have had opportunities of surveying a great part of Scotland ; and, therefore, this my argument of experience stands firm and uninjured. You are warranted, you say, indeed, to discredit the foundation of my argument, “ when you “ are able to shew that the Scotch labourers “ are, in part, fed from the fruit of the la- “ bour of England.” It is truly “ in “ part,” Sir. This feeding, or rather all that is said about it, arises entirely from the grant of a little money to a few labourers, in the north of Scotland, to make a canal ; which, I may say, is, entirely, a mercenary speculation of the English labourers : for they will do here, as they have done in all other cases, impose crushing dues, and customs upon the canal, *to obtain a usurious return of cent. per cent.* In the next place, I stated, in support of my opinion, that “ the establishment, and income of the pea- “ santry is so small, that it does not come “ within the range of the taxing-system.” You, on the contrary, have always maintained that the poverty of the English peasantry proceeds from this system. I could never conceive the grounds on which this opinion rested. But you have, now, clearly pointed out these. You say [p. 483] that, since the people of England do not “ dis- “ pense with the use of shoes, shirts, hats, “ &c ; since they do not go naked by day, “ nor lay upon the ground by night, nor “ dig up their food with their snouts, nor “ catch it after the manner of the fox or the “ hawk,” they are, therefore, beggared by the taxing-system. This is quite plain. You mean, that, because the articles which the labourer uses are highly taxed, he is forced to pay a higher price for them than he otherwise would do. Very true : but this does

not affect my argument at all. It is the same whether a man pay a penny, a shilling, or a pound for a thing, if his own income, and the relative value of things enables him to do so. Are the wages of every British labourer not proportioned to the price of necessaries, enhanced as it may be by the present circumstances of things ? It is an undeniable fact, that they not only are so, but, in many cases, far above the fair proportion. My argument, therefore, must acquire, with you, additional weight ; for since no person, who can be called a labourer, is actually, and directly taxed, and since his wages are always fully proportioned to the price of his provisions, it follows as a necessary conclusion that he does not come within the range of the taxing-system. If you will allow me, “ school master ” as I was falsely taken for, to be not, altogether, “ incapable of reflecting with advantage on “ the nature and effect of the taxing-sys- “ tem,” I will say, that none are oppressed [i. e. “ whose fruits are drained away to “ keep others without labour”] but land- holders, who have, a number of years ago, given long, and, of course, low leases of their estates, and some other individuals, such as annuitants whose incomes do not rise in proportion to the enhancement of the value of things.—II. Your second article [p. 484] requires little reply. In the end of this article, you ask, “ if vice has increased “ with the increase of reading, how are we “ to hope that vice will be diminished by a “ further increase of reading ?” It is by no means an indubitable fact, that vice has increased with the increase of reading. But admitting, for argument’s sake, that it is so, I say, that vice has increased *altogether independent of the increase of reading*, because the number of readers has far from increased in proportion to the vice. There are undoubtedly more readers than there were ; but these additional are not to be attended to, because they have by no means increased in proportion to the quantity of reading. A great quantity of the additional vice, has, undoubtedly, arisen from some of those who could read imposing upon those who are ignorant, and who, had they been themselves able to read, would, readily, and effectually, have detected, and stigmatized the sophistry of their vicious deceivers.—III. In the beginning of your third article, [p. 484] you say, “ if the peasantry were “ taught to read the bible, they would, go- “ ing farther, read publications well calcu- “ lated to add to the stock of vice :” then you add, that I have made no reply to this. I did make a reply to it. I said that “ read-

"ing may corrupt a man's principles; but, " rely upon it, his want of education will " lead him farther astray." This opinion I supported by reasonings founded on common experience, giving it greatly the superiority of yours, which, unsupported by reasoning as it is, independently, has less verisimilitude in itself. But, in addition to what I have said, I can support my side by the case of Scotland, where every one can read, and where none of those evils have taken place which you so fearfully prognosticate.—You say that the Newspapers which every ale-house keeps, will attract readers to that nursery of vice. I grant it will; and does. But I am, by no means, of opinion that the capacity of reading inspires a man with a desire of knowing the news of the day. My own observation [and I have had many instances] informs me that those who read least, or who cannot read at all, are the fondest of talking about the news of the day. Fewer, therefore, I am inclined to think, would resort to the ale-house, for the sake of reading, than who, presently, go for the sake of *hearing* and *talking*.—“The “appointment” say you, [p. 486] “of “Scotch schoolmasters is perfectly a *political* affair, as it would, in all likelihood, “very soon become in England.” You very candidly declare that you have never been in Scotland, and that your acquaintance with it is entirely from hearsay. If you have been informed that the appointment of the schoolmasters is political, you have been completely misinformed: and, as I am no “schoolmaster” myself, it is not “from “interest” that I declare that there are no appointments in the British empire *less political*. As a proof of this, I shall insert an advertisement for a schoolmaster, some of which our newspapers almost constantly contain. “Wanted for the parish-school “of Locus a person who can teach writing, “reading, and the mathematics. None “need apply but who can stand the strict “examination which will be made into his “moral character, and personal abilities.” The examination, which universally takes place, is made by the presbytery, that is, by the clergymen of the district; and the preferred, i. e. the most accomplished candidate, whether Whig, or Tory, is impartially appointed.—You cannot “perceive how the “capacity of reading would tend to make “the peasant either more attentive, or more “docile.” He would be more docile, in my apprehension; as, undoubtedly, understanding better, supposing him at church, the language of the preacher. All our public speakers use an oratorical style,

a style above the comprehension of the mere colloquist which can be understood by the person only who can read, and consult a dictionary. He would be more attentive; because his curiosity would incite him to attend more closely to “expositions and applications of the contents of the Bible,” which, in his private reading, he might not be able to understand. I may take notice here, by the by, of your anticipation that “great numbers would “read the Bible, solely because they thought “it their duty, running over the words without prying into the meaning.” These numbers would consist of the dullest and most useless part of the community; of those, who, although they could not add any thing to the brilliancy of literature, might be *vicious* in the extreme; and, consequently, I must think, and “perceive,” that were this part, who, notwithstanding, with sobriety and virtue might be excellent mechanics, persuaded that it was their duty to read the Bible, they would harmlessly, and therefore advantageously, employ their leisure hours in “going over the words,” instead of wallowing in sottishness and ignorance.—“You are quite certain [p. 487] “that, generally speaking, writing and reading are worse than useless in the army and navy.” I cannot speak to this point from actual experience, as you can, Mr. Cobbett; but I can speak pretty firmly upon the evidence of testimony. I am pretty certain, that this disadvantage, which you have seen attending a soldier’s being able to write and read, resulted from the imperfection of the English plan of education; from *all* the soldiers and sailors not being equally cultivated. The scholars would naturally be exposed to the envy and odium of their inferiors, and to the jealousy and neglect of their superiors. This treatment naturally produces those characteristics which you mention of the *educated warriors*. These, like all other the most valuable things, if properly situated, would be transcendently useful and glorious; and, if displaced, become the most dangerous and unmanageable. The French soldiers, I understand, can mostly all read and write; and we see what excellence the military tactics of France have attained to. A very experienced military acquaintance of mine, who has had opportunities of knowing the national characters of most of the soldiers of Europe, declares, that he thinks the Germans, who are all well educated, the best soldiers. They have not the short-lived fire of the Frenchman, nor the audacious bravery of the Englishman. Their cultivated minds render them sober and virtuous,

and enabling them to understand what they are about, they are more tractable and docile.—You ask (p. 487), “is it not evident that all men cannot rise, that all soldiers and sailors cannot become officers, either commissioned or non-commissioned: and, this being the case, would not the education of them tend to create discontent, rather than cheerful obedience?” Not at all, Mr. Cobbett, in my humble opinion. One might as well say, that there would be continually tumults in Scotland, arising from the “discontent” of the peasants, because they do not *all* rise to be proprietors of land, and governors of the state. Discontent, as well as honour, does not proceed from absolute, but relative merit; and, therefore, it is impossible to conceive how there could be more discontent in the army, when the soldiers are all educated, than when they are all ignorant. The only predicament in which discontent can exist is in such a state as that of our army, where some are educated, and some ignorant. It is impossible to be even a non-commissioned officer, in a qualified manner, without writing and reading. Rolls are to be kept, returns to be made, and letters to be read and written. Now, suppose all the common soldiers to be completely illiterate; there will, in this case, be comparatively no emulation and laudable ambition for promotion, which are main springs of activity, enterprise, and virtue. There will be no desire that the laurel of victory and valour should confer the sword of authority and command. The common soldier would say to himself, “Why need I contend for an office, which, whatever be my bravery and military expertness, I am unqualified to hold? I must grovel for life where I am, and since it is so, I will do it with as much ease and as little danger as possible.” But what innumerable advantages rush upon the mind on the supposition of the other case! All the men being, and nearly equally, educated, each individual feeling his intrinsic accomplishments, and at the same time his relative equality, would modestly and strenuously emulate that superiority in valour and expertness, which would necessarily decide the superiority in authority and command. What an inconceivable benefit might not our British army derive from such a method! *That unjustifiable, impolitic, and abominable practice of purchasing commands in the army*, which is a grand disgrace and defect in our military system, would gradually take its departure. Ignorance, cowardice, and inexperience, could not have the effrontery to dictate to learned bravery, and

military practice. Our Home Pophams, our Whitelockes, and our Duckworths, would then soon vanish. Instead of those stupid, effeminate, white-washed monkies, who idly and proudly strut about our streets, dressed in red coats, we would see a set of brave, tried, martial, commanders, whose degrees of rank might be ascertained from the number of their honourable scars, and who are always actuated by the Flaccian sentiment: “*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*” I do not mean, that all our officers should be drawn from the lower ranks. Contingent superiority of birth and fortune, as it brings superiority in the world, must also, in some cases, confer higher original rank in the army. But, were the common soldiery qualified to rise to the different stages of commanders, a general system of emulation, from the lowest soldier to the highest general, would beneficially take place; and, if any purchases occurred, they would be made only by worthy persons. Such a plan would better organize and invigorate our army; and, unless some such reform takes place, I will venture to augur the gradual failure of our forces both naval and military. Indeed, Mr. Cobbett, you are forced to agree with me in this point. You say, [p. 486] “The soldier of reading and writing is to be preferred, if he be equally good with his comrade in other respects.” Certainly: and why not “equally good with his comrade in other respects?” An enlightened mind was never known, and cannot in the nature of things prevent a man from being “sober, cleanly, punctual, early rising, vigilant, and honest.” On the contrary, it has been found, almost always, to invest him with these admirable qualities. The contradictory instances to this which you mention are merely insulated and contingent, and are not to be taken into account as characterising the great run. An enlightened mind makes a man see the propriety of subordination and compliance, and makes him fight with the firmness and caution of the brave soldier, and not with the temerity and fury of the ignorant fanatic. Since you have admitted conditionally, you must, therefore, Sir, now admit unlimitedly, that “the man of reading and writing” (to use your own language) “is to be preferred;” and this concession being made, it is impossible to resist my argument, that *a general system of education ought to be adopted in England, for the advantage of the army and navy.*—IV. You see now, that it is not through the “deceitful medium of self-interest” that I view my acceptance of the words *ignorance and learning*,

and what you have said on this point (p. 488, and now with regard to Buonaparté, p. 751) carries not the least inducement to my mind (seriously speaking) to alter my opinion. Your story about the “judge and painter” (p. 488) is certainly more a sophistical attempt to distract the attention than to persuade the reason. I do not say that a person who has made himself an adept in all the mechanical professions, and has seen all the quarters of the globe, would be justly termed *ignorant*; but I would simply ask, how many are there of such persons, and how much more productive the crop is, when the soil is pulverized and manured before the seed is sown?—Why, Mr. Cobbett, is “your reader to bear in mind, that the labourers of Scotland had been, in the preamble to an act of parliament, represented as better members of society than the labourers of England; and that herein was contained a challenge on the part of *Mr. Whitbread's instructors!* against the people of England?” No, Sir, it was not the case. Without saying any thing about the relative superiority or inferiority of the Scots to the English, the preamble to Mr. Whitbread's bill meant only, that “the most convincing proof” (to quote its own words) “of the beneficial effects of instructing youth arose from the experience of that part of the united kingdom called Scotland.” It did not say, that Scotland was, relatively, superior to England in morality and virtue. Not at all. These beneficial effects might have been fully felt in Scotland, and yet the Scots be inferior to the English in these excellencies. What was said by Mr. Whitbread, probably, your “provocation,” and perhaps, national jealousy, amplified into “a challenge,” although no “challenge” was either really meant or given. It is a maxim with every wise man and every wise nation, to borrow improvements, and to imitate superior excellence, in any object, however inferior, that may be as a whole. This was a maxim of the ancient Romans, whose bravery and wisdom made them masters of the world. As expressive of it, allow me to employ the elegant language, which Sallust puts into the mouth of Cæsar, when defending Cataline:—“*Majores nostri, P. C., neque consilii, neque audaciæ, unquam eguere: neque superbia obstabat, quo minus aliena instituta, si modo probarent, imitarentur.*” Arma atque tela militaria ab Samnilibus, insignia magistratum ab Tuscis, pleraque sumserunt: postremo quod ubique *apud socios*, aut hostis idoneum videbatur, cum summo

studio domi exsequebantur: imitari, quam invidere bonis malebant.”—My description of Scotland [p. 496] I still adhere to: and when I tell you that I am not a “schoolmaster,” and that I have travelled over great part of my native country, you may be the more inclined to credit it. The description which you have received and published [p. 490] is expressive of more wretchedness, than ever afflicted the lowest cottage, hundreds of years ago. Edinburgh, of which you have got so miserable an idea, is well worth your seeing, and would stand your severest criticism. It is allowed, by the most impartial travellers, to be unequalled for the grandeur of its surrounding scenery, the strength and beauty of its buildings, and for the regularity and symmetry of its streets. I earnestly wish your occupations could allow you to make a jaunt to see it; when I would be extremely happy to go along with you to point out its curiosities, and would prevail on my father to make you welcome to lodge in our family, which resides during winter in that city. Then, I would have an opportunity of shewing you that “the lower classes of the inhabitants of Edinburgh” do not “throw, from their windows, into the street, all that you send away without offending your senses;” and that there is no solid reason for making the distinction between the recruits brought up to Chatham barracks, on account of “that disorder of the skin which for my sake is kept nameless.” Then shewing you the happy state of Scotland, and explaining my mind fully to you, with oral accuracy, I have little doubt of being able to make you, at least, approve more than you do, of adopting a plan for educating the English peasantry.—But if the state of Scotland be really as I have described it, “how happens it,” you ask, “that we hear of no emigration to that country?” There is actually some degree of resort to that country; for there are a number of English families at present in Edinburgh and daily coming to it, on account of the quietness, and cheapness of living, and convenience of educating their children. But your question is rather inconsiderate, as being, in my opinion, hostile to your argument. For, I think, that no ingress of foreigners, into, and an emigration of natives from a country, often, indicates its prosperity. It shews that its lands are occupied, and cultivated, and its productions used and manufactured to the full extent. So that foreigners are not enticed to resort to the country, from the prospect of gaining wealth thro' the neglect, ignorance, and laziness of the na-

tives. It shews, undoubtedly, that population is increasing, and equal to the productions of the soil. My reason, therefore, leads me to think that we are rather to infer the prosperity than the poverty of Scotland from the circumstance of the Scotch emigrating in great numbers to England, and, also, that I, Scoto-Britannus, and Mr. Whitbread may pay you visits, from motives less praise-worthy, than, "from pure philanthropy, to teach you how to obtain 'plenty, and banish poverty, and vice!'"—I have had some effect, already, I see, in persuading you to approve of my way of thinking on this subject. In your Register you [p. 337] have these words:—"The Scots emigrated for want of work; a certain proof of a want of industry, ingenuity or of enterprize." In my last letter I argued [p. 501] that, on the contrary, the emigration of the Scots proved "more ingenuity, industry, and enterprize, than to remain, at home, deprived of agricultural concerns, of both convenience, and materials for practicing a mechanical profession." In reply to this, [p. 491] you say "*I admit it all*, without the least reserve." And you add:—"in order to convince me that a similar plan is desirable for England, he has only to prove that England would derive strength from the emigration of her most able-bodied sons." Yes, Mr. Cobbett, I will do more. I will shew that no emigration of her able-bodied sons will take place, but what is advantageous.—It was not the system of education that exclusively caused the emigration from Scotland. That system, in the existing circumstances, might perhaps increase it; but, by itself, had not, nor can have that tendency. On the contrary, education as it makes men more acquainted with their native country, in enabling them to read its history, and acquire associations of ideas connected with it, it makes them more averse to quit it. What made the Scotch Highlanders emigrate, was their being deprived of their farms, by the new plan of husbandry. Not being accommodated with manufactories, or fisheries, as they ought to have been, they were necessarily forced either to starve, or to leave their native shores. Had they [who you allow have all a great deal of nationality,] got work, and consequently subsistence, you may depend upon it, they would not have forsaken the beloved habitations of their forefathers. But the English labourers are not so situated. Had these been so, uncultivated as they are, and in fact, the more on that account, you may be sure we should have heard of their emi-

grations also. The English labourer seeks less for employment, than he is himself sought after. Manufactories are too numerous and extensive, and agriculture too universal and improved. From this fact, and from another very strong one, viz. the experience arising from the observation of the miseries and disasters which have befallen the Scotch emigrants, and the resulting dread of similar speculations, it may, with nearly absolute certainty, be anticipated that the introduction of the education of the poor into England, would not make the tendency to emigration greater than it presently is; and, therefore, you must admit that *you are convinced that a plan of education similar to the Scotch is desirable for England.*"—With regard to your "first instance of undeniable facts," I still deny that your criterion, founded upon the relative amount of the taxes, is a fair one. I still maintain that a great part of what you call English taxes are paid by Scotch labour. For since the enterprize of Scotsmen leads them up to London, that they may, *there*, more advantageously exercise their "great talents;" and since when settled, there, their ingenuity suggests, and industry realizes the most extensive, profitable, and, at the same time, tax-affording speculations, how can it be denied, I say, that part, at least, of what comes under the denomination of English taxes is paid by Scotch labour? Your criterion, consequently is not fair.—But there is another consideration of your criterion which I have not yet noticed, and which still more clearly points out its impropriety. You say [p. 336] "where there are two countries under one and the same government, lying adjoining to each other, having both a due proportion of the offices and emoluments of the state, then the amount of the taxes is a fair criterion of the respective industry of each." But I am not at all of opinion, Mr. Cobbett, that Scotland, at present, has her "due proportion of the offices and emoluments" of the British Empire. It is notorious that, I may say all, our nobility, spending their time and their money in London, at the Court, drain away the produce of the industry of the tenants, from Scotland, and from the amount of the Scotch taxes, to squander it in England, and swell the amount of the English taxes.—We have no Lord Lieutenant to draw a crowd of wealthy satellites after him. We have no Stamp-office; and, comparatively, no Custom-house. We have very few appointed officers of government drawing a share of the public money. After this account, I think it can be hardly said that Scotland has

her due proportion of offices and emoluments ;" and, therefore, from the conjunct force of this, and my former objection, I must protest against the fairness of your celebrated criterion.—These objections may serve besides as a sufficient answer to that observation of yours, which you consider as your most important, viz. " that large sums " are annually granted out of the fruit of " the labourers of England, expressly, to " prevent the Scotch from emigrating, by " making work for them at home."—I have moreover demonstrated, upon different unobjectionable data, that from the relation of Scotland to England a great part of the English taxes are paid by Scotch labour. These sums, therefore, which you so particularly mark, as paid by the English, to support the Scotch labour, are really altogether, *mediately*, paid by Scotland herself ; and, at any rate, she ostensibly, and immediately pays her proportional part of them. It ought always to be recollected, too, that at the time of the union, exactly 100 years ago, Scotland laboured under no national debts. Immediately after that event, she drank port at 2 shillings a bottle, instead of having her cups overflowing with claret at 8 pence. Every other article, in consequence of the uncommon duties imposed, was raised in the same ratio, and being taxed in every respect similar to England, Scotland might well enough receive these sums in consideration of her own relative poverty, and in consideration for being obliged to pay taxes to discharge debts, which she had not been the means of contracting.—I have now, Sir, successively, replied to all your objections to my former reasonings, as fully as I have room. If you think that I have not done so, satisfactorily, believe me it is not for want of argument, but of opportunity. There are several hints in my former letter which you have quite overlocked, and one, in particular, on which I lay a good deal of stress. " Were the peasantry " I observed [p. 499] " obliged, as is the case in Scotland, to educate their children, the school-fees would employ the surplus-part of their income, which would otherwise have been squandered in idleness debauchery and vice." Upon the whole, I think your arguments [if so powerful] do no more than maintain the equilibrium with mine. To decide the question, then, in my mind, at least, I shall adduce two other arguments which after Lord Bacon I call its " *experimentum crucis*.—1. The education

of youth affords the best means of employing that period of life. Youth is a time of life when the power of acquirement is strongest, and when the habits of life are fixed.—The virtue or the vice of the man depends almost entirely upon the conduct of the youth,—a sentiment expressed by men of all ages.—

Quo seinel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu :—

says Horace ; and Pope, with the same idea,
" *Ti Education forms the human mind* ;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd.

Were your English peasants able to read the Bible, they would see in the Proverbs, besides many other golden maxims, " train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." How are your peasants children to be employed unless at school ? Being allowed to spend their boyhood according to their own inclinations, if they do not acquire the habits of thieves, and robbers, they will learn a laziness, fickleness, and ungovernable stiffness which will necessarily prevent them from being such useful members of society, as they, otherwise, might have been.—2. The system of education would tend to establish, and maintain the purity of Parliament. This argument applies peculiarly to England, where every 40 shilling freeholder being entitled to a vote, immense concourses of people necessarily assemble on occasions of elections. It has been universally experienced that the declaimer has never so much effect as when speaking to such assemblies, as surround the English hustings. Draughts of sophistry are swallowed, which pervade the mob with the rapidity of electricity, and which, unless guarded against by the enlightened minds of the audience, intoxicate the people, and make them run regardless, like a stream, after the will of the speaker. How, for instance, unless the Electors of Westminster could read ; could they be saved by your salutary *written*, or *printed* counsels, from the delusion of the mellifluous tongue of a Sheridan, or the naval roar of a Lord Cochrane ?—I must, now, conclude, with begging your excuse for so long a letter : because it is written to justify me, when I, with the greatest deference, still affirm that your arguments, regarding the Poor's education-bill, have not, in the slightest degree, altered the disinterested opinion of your benevolent, and obliged correspondent, J. B.—TH—K, (SCOTO-BRITANNUS).—Edinburgh, 18th Nov. 1807.